FIRST PANZER DRAGOON II PICTURES INSIDE!

MEAN MACHINES SEGA

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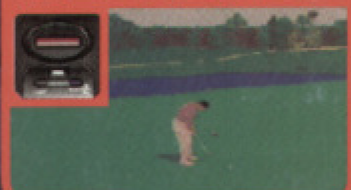
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VAMPIRE HUNTER

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GUNSTAR HEROES

MEGADRIVE

PGA TOUR '96

SATURN

BAKU BAKU

SATURN

TOSHINDEN

SATURN

STREETFIGHTER ALPHA


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MEAN MACHINES IN JAPAN

This month's issue brings you the sights, sounds and fishy smells of the Japanese capital, as well as exclusive interviews from Capcom and Climax, the Goliath and David of Saturn development. November was a big month for Sega, with the Big Three virtual games making the running over there. Tokyo was also the scene of a very tentative roll-out of Nintendo's new 64 machine, with two (count 'em) incomplete games. We, on the other hand, have considerably more Saturn reviews inside.

YOUR GUIDE TO TOKYO

NERIMA
The Toshimaen amusement park and scene of the Sega Saturn show.

SHINJUKU KU
Capcom's high-rise headquarters. Climax's low-rise offices



AKHIHABARA
The 'Electric Town'. A cluster of games and high-tech electronics stores. Unbelievable gear on display.

TOKYO BAY
The venue for Disneyland and the new development of Makuhari. The exhibition hall held the Nintendo Shushinkai show.

SCRATCH CARD CLAIM DETAILS

For those of you who may be missing a card, here's a legally-obliged reminder just for you... You could have won one of 20 Sega Saturns, each with a copy of Virtua Cop!

How to claim your prize:

Complete the form below. Send your winning scratch card and completed form to: Saturn Scratchcard competition, Marketing Department, EMAP Images, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Winners will be notified by post by 13th February 1995.

SATURN SCRATCH CARD COMPETITION FORM

I enclose my scratch card revealing three 'HIT' symbols.

Name:..

Address:..

Telephone no:..........................

Important

In order to claim a Saturn and Virtua Cop you must have revealed three 'HIT' symbols on your free scratch card.

You may only claim one Saturn and Virtua Cop per winning scratch card.

We advise that you send your winning scratch card and form by registered post.

Employees of EMAP Images, the card reproducers and printers of the scratchcard, their families and associates, are not eligible to enter this competition. No cash alternative to the prize is available. No entries received after the closing date (22nd January 1996) will be accepted. No correspondence will be entered into by employees of EMAP Images in all matters relating to the competition. By entering you agree to take part in any post-event publicity. Entries with defaced or altered scratch cards will be disqualified. No purchase necessary. Write to EMAP Images Marketing Department and a card will be scratched on your behalf. Cards scratched on request are limited to one per enquiry.

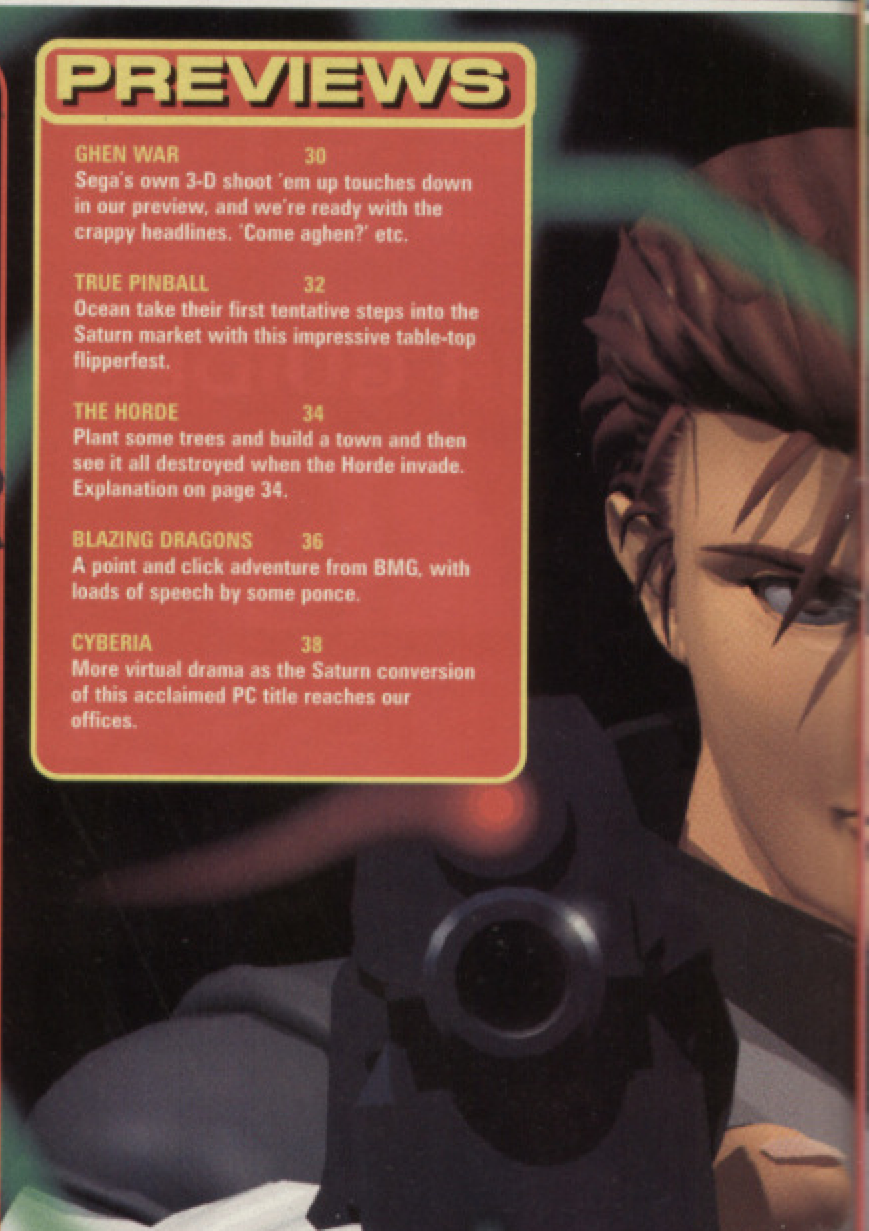
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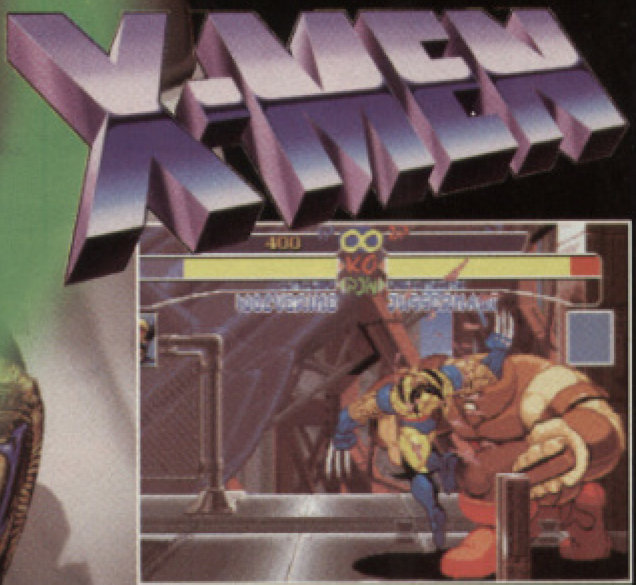
PREVIEWS



FEATURES







REVIEWS

MEGADRIVE

SATURN

32X

GAME GEAR

REGULARS

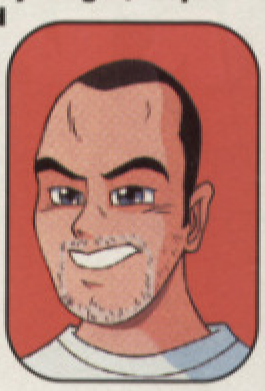
EDITORIAL

Getting to go to Japan is a rare privilege, particularly if you are into games, as Tokyo is unquestionably the games capital of the world. What happens in Japan affects all Saturn users, because the machine has a larger installed base and more developers there than in Europe and America.

From what I saw I came back happy and assured about the Saturn's future. In the last month we've seen four games that should drive Playstation owners mad with envy: Rally, Cop, VF2 and X-Men, which won't be coming to the Sony machine for some time. On Japanese telly, the Sega adverts come thick and fast, and in the games shops, Virtua Cop was flying off the shelves. But it's in the arcade the Sega's domination is most apparent. VF2 is an institution there, and Sega's new machines; Fighting Vipers, Sky Target, Cop 2 and Indy 500 crowd out most of the competition. These titles will undoubtedly come to Saturn. Even Capcom have anointed the Sega machine as the console for users who want home conversions, and are thus about to provide an awesome conversion of Darkstalker's Revenge. If you've got a Saturn this Christmas, congratulations. You'll be able to take part.

GUS





GAG OF THE MONTH



Morecambe and Wise reigned supreme as television's premier comedy double act for over thirty years. Few have even approached the genius that made their Christmas shows some of the most popular programmes in British television history. We revisit this national institution now, paying respectful tribute to Eric and Ernie...

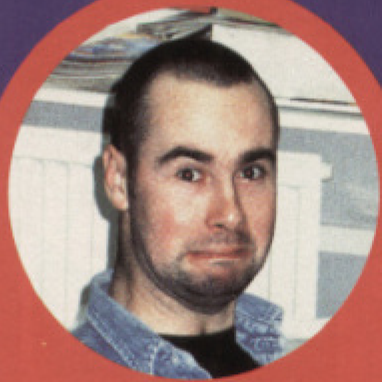
The two friends are settling down for the night. As Ernie prepares to turn out the light he turns to Eric and offers him a word of warning.

ERNIE: You'll have sciatica in the morning.

ERIC: No I won't, I'll have Shredded Wheat like everyone else.

TURNING JAPANESE

The MEAN MACHINES team look east to the Land of the Rising Sun and share their thoughts on nice things from Nippon...



GUS

If there's one thing our globetrotting editor likes about Japan it's free holidays there. Karaoke comes a close second. "It's my favourite Japanese export," he says. "I consider Summer Nights from Grease and Erasure's Chains of Love to be my finest turns." More unfamiliar delights from his recent visit include a particular soft drink. "There's this stuff called C C Lemon which you can get out of vending machines in the street – it tastes great." Let's not forget that Tokyo is the city where street corner vending machines similarly dispense disposable pairs of knickers. Gus claims not to know what they taste like.



CLAIRE

"Hebereke's my favourite Japanese thing!" beams MEAN MACHINES gaisha girl Claire, bouncing up and down and clapping her hands. "I like it because it's full of sweet furry animals and cute blobby things. Japanese grub's alright as well – cracker snacks are cool. They're little crunchy things made out of seaweed and stuff." There are, however, painful skeletons lurking in Claire's closet. "Years ago a boyfriend bought me a bonsai tree for Christmas. Sadly, I finished with him a few weeks later and the tree suddenly died. It was really spooky because they're supposed to live for hundreds of years. Do you think calling it Mildred was a mistake?"



MARCUS

"Godzilla would probably be top of my Japanese hit parade," Marcus decides. "However, an honourable mention must also go to the classic Japanese martial arts show Monkey. Winter evenings in the otherwise grim 1970s were enlivened by the antics of the mischeivous Monkey god and his trusty friends Sandy and Pigsy." Marcus's eyes mist over as memories of badly dubbed chopsocky get confused with his favourite Godzilla film, Destroy All Monsters. "Do you remember the bit where Monkey head-butted Mechagodzilla and sent him crashing into that flying saucer? They don't make them like that any more." Shame.

TOKYO NIGHTS

Yes, it's that time of the evening when your most annoying relative talks you through the 'highlights' of their foreign trip. Yawn. This is the bit where Gus gets out his holiday snaps. Let's get it over with....



Dave Upchurch from Nintendo Mag 'researching' Patchinko with his expenses.



The heart of the Japanese countryside. Busy, isn't it.



In the Akhibabra district the games stores have demo units outside, where games are demo'd up to a fortnight before release.



One of the weird Sega coin-ops. This one is for girls, and dispenses Mystic Meg-style horoscopes.



LUCY

"I've got a Japanese pussy," reveals Lucy. "It's very brown and furry and everyone in the office likes stroking it." Lucy's toy cat Tiddles was a present from Tokyo, and is currently her favourite Japanese object. Sadly, Lucy's new furry friend has failed to find favour at home. "My landlord told me he thought it was minging and wouldn't let me keep it in the house, so I've let it stand guard over my computer." Actually, just between us, all this landlord stuff is a bit of a fib – Lucy's got a boyfriend, but she doesn't want anyone to know she's going out with someone because she wants to get as many love letters as Claire. So it's our secret, OK?



STEVE

"Well they're crap at football," grumbles Steve when asked about his favourite Japanese thing. "Gary Lineker used to play over there – does he count?" Finding anything else Steve likes on any subject at all is clearly something of a struggle, seeing as the best he can come up with is his local Japanese restaurant. "It's the only place where you can eat a burger with chopsticks," he grins. "My local Chinese take-away is a good laugh as well because the bloke that serves you is so small he has to stand on a box to see over the counter. And down my road there's a chippie where..." Yes, thank you.

Many thanks to Woody at Virgin for organising the trip, which has allowed me to witness the many inscrutable ways of the east. People don't get shoved onto tube trains but everyone is very polite and the department stores still have bell boys in the lifts (except they're girls). The telly is crap, probably the worst in the world: it's either sumo, sushi or a panel show. You shouldn't blow your nose in the street, holes in the road are dug and filled in within the space of a night. And if you want chips, you ask for 'Flied potato'. Seriously.

HONOURABLE HONCHOS

EMPEROR
Steve 'old Marvel' Merrett
GRASSHOPPER
Angus 'backhander' Swan
GAISHA GIRL
Claire 'Sega satin' Coulthard
PAGODA POG
Marcus 'fifth Beatle' Hearn
MADAME BUTTERFLY
Lucy 'supermodel' Hill
KARATE KID
Steven 'Daniel-son' Key

FREELANCE SAMURAI
Jaime Smith
NINJA ASSASSIN
Liza Merrett
KIMONO CUTIE
Tina Hicks

SPECIAL THANKS TO: Sam Forrest, David Hanks, Keith Mason, Eileen Peters (thanks for dinner) and Ann Williams.

GUS THANKS: Woody at Virgin, Warren and Gary Harrod and Maximum magazine. Kan Naito, Dave Upchurch and Tad Yamaguchi at Capcom.

EDITORIAL PAGODA: EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU
TELEPHONE: 0171-972 6700
FAX: 0171-972 6701
PRINTING BY: Cooper Clegg
COLOUR: Sarah-Jane Leavey, Gary Lord and Sarah Best
DISTRIBUTION: BBC Frontline
PRINTED IN THE UK

COVER: Vampire Hunter by Steve Kyte.

SUBSCRIPTION & BACK ISSUE ENQUIRIES
TOWER PUBLISHING
TOWER HOUSE
SOVEREIGN PARK
LATHKILL ST
MARKET HARBORO
LEICESTER
LE16 9ET
TEL: 01858-468888

SUBSCRIPTION RATES (12 ISSUES INC P&P)
United Kingdom and BFPO: £30.00
Overseas Surface Mail: £36.00
Airmail Europe and Eire: £42.00
Airmail Zones 1 & 2: £66.00
Airmail Zone 2: £69.00

Back issues UK: £3.50 each
Back issues, rest of world: £4.99 each

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Employees and suppliers of EMAP IMAGES and their relatives are not eligible for competitions. There is no cash alternative for any of the prizes on offer. And you can forget those multiple entries too, fella!

NEWS

FULL OF EAS PROMISE

PANZER DRAGOON 2

PANZER DRAGOON 2

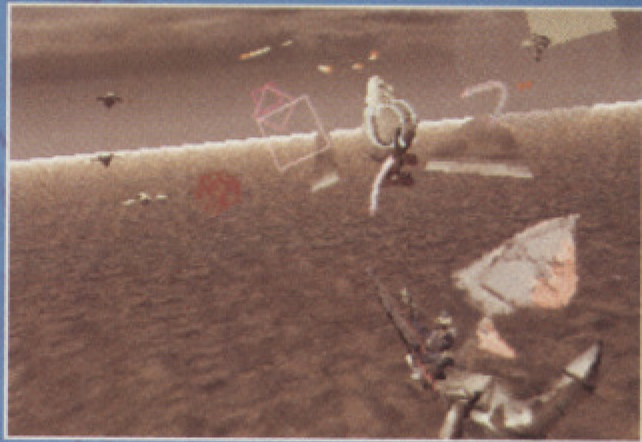
BY SEGA

SATURN

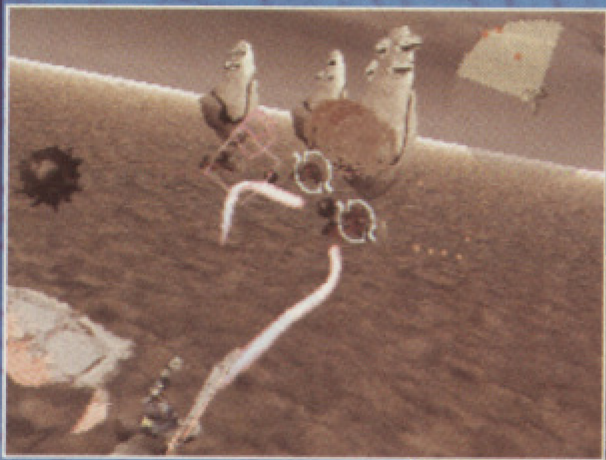
RELEASE SPRING 96

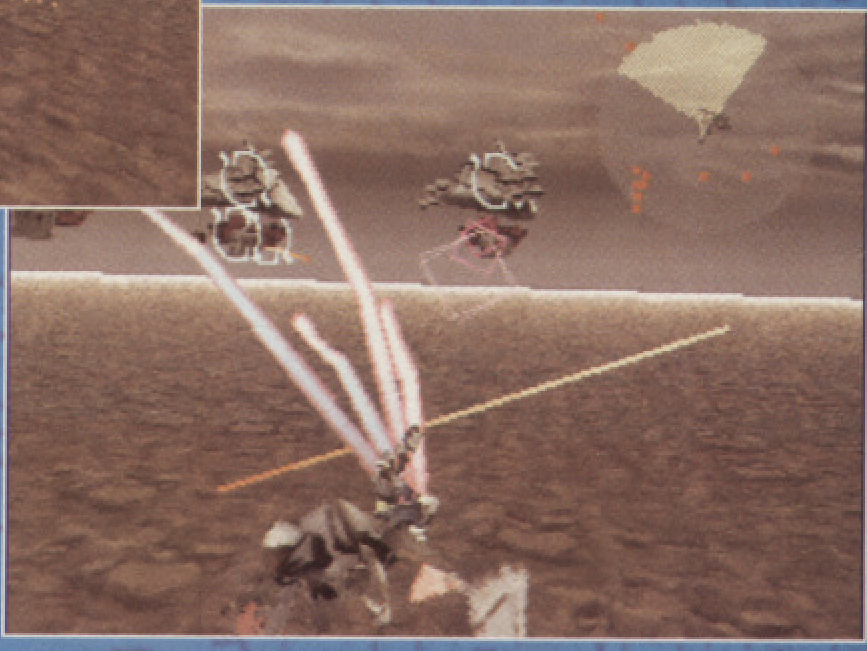
ORIGIN: JAPAN

The big game of the show, but surprisingly under-played, with only a video of the early levels shown on some unmarked monitors. When MEAN MACHINES got back we demanded more information from Sega, who promptly produced this very early disc. The most arresting feature is the new ground-based sections of the game, which imitate the fantastic FMV intro of the original. The same four-direction viewpoint system is retained, but the game is made less linear by building in different routes for you to choose. Although the graphics of this early version may look basic, the movement is fantastic, showing the progress made in Saturn programming since the first Panzer Dragoon.







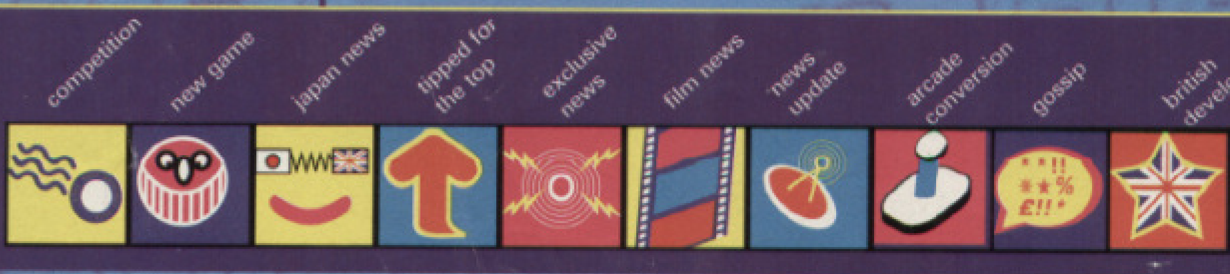




Intro sequence promise becomes gameplay reality in Panzer Dragoon 2.

We've shaken up the news section, by adding more information and a gratuitous icon 'key' system that looks quite cool whilst remaining completely superfluous. Study the little pics and index them to each story for the sexiest news desk layouts in console-magdom

KEY



STERN

MEAN MACHINES was in Tokyo last month, and found time to visit a Saturn consumer show being held in Toshimaen Amusement Park, in the northwest Nerima area of the city. Although the show was open to the general public and the games exhibited were mostly due for imminent release, there were a couple of surprises, including the first showing of Panzer Dragoon 2. MEAN MACHINES, as far as we know, was the only British Sega mag there.





ROBO PIT

- ROBO PIT
- BY ALTRON
- SATURN
- RELEASE: JANUARY
- ORIGIN: JAPAN

This bizarre game has received some attention in Japan and had its first outing at the show. It's a 3-D battle game set in polygon arenas, but has more in common with Namco games like Cybersled than VF2 or Tohshinden. You take on a variety of armed slinkies and anthropomorphised shapes in a slickly produced 3-D game unlike anything else on the format.

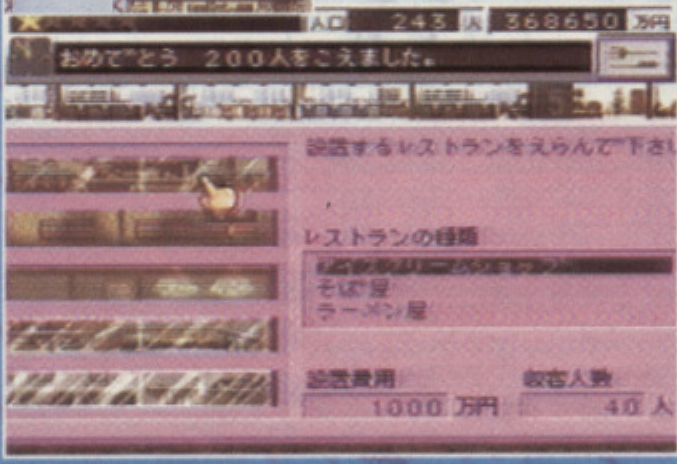


THE TOWER

- THE TOWER
- PUBLISHER: MAXIS
- SATURN
- RELEASE: DECEMBER
- ORIGIN: JAPAN







Maxis, the master craftsmen of simulation games, were showing the completed version of The Tower, known on the PC as Sim Tower. The gameplay is similar to the successful Sim City, but the mechanics now involve high-rise buildings and their functions. The Tower doesn't look like much, but Maxis games are always strongest on long term playability.

KING, THE SPIRITS

KING, THE SPIRITS
BY ATLUS
SATURN
RELEASE: DECEMBER
ORIGIN: JAPAN

Someone with a grammar problem and a yearning to create a Ridge Racer clone is the person behind King, The Spirits. This sports car driver produced mixed emotions at the show, because although it has no strikingly poor features, it looks rather sad next to Sega Rally. Like Rally, it has a two-player split-screen mode.



HAT TRICK HEROES

HAT TRICK HERO
BY TAITO
SATURN
RELEASE: DECEMBER
ORIGIN: JAPAN

Taito bravely attempt a football game on the Saturn, and one using a colourful simplistic perspective like their arcade games. There wasn't the time (or frankly, the inclination) to get into this one at the show, but for Europeans weaned on the sophisticated Fifa, Hat Trick looks a bit childish.



ROAD RACER

ROAD RACER
BY JVC
SATURN
RELEASE: DECEMBER
ORIGIN: JAPAN

Road Racer wants to be Ridge Racer so much. Playing this, we saw big red sports cars, polygon tracks and large buildings and a fair amount of speed. But the graphics are grey and dull, and the high roadside fencing is like that bit of the M6 going through Birmingham.







GAME OF LIFE

GAME OF LIFE
BY TAKARA
SATURN
RELEASE: DECEMBER
ORIGIN: JAPAN



Bizarre. You may know of a board game called 'Game of Life' which has a funny number spinner and lots of little plastic buildings. Lo and behold, a Japanese version of this crusty cardboard entertainment turns up at the show. Unlikely to ever set foot outside Japan, and just what the hell do Takara think they're doing?



DEVIL'S COURSE

DEVIL'S COURSE
BY T&E SOFT
SATURN
RELEASE: DECEMBER
ORIGIN: JAPAN

T&E have done Pebble beach and US Masters on the Saturn. Now they imaginatively choose Hell as the venue for their next golf game. Despite the volcanoes, fire and brimstone, shadows of the Valley of Death etc. this seems to add very little to the other two games.



CREATURE SHOCK

CREATURE SHOCK
BY DATA EAST
SATURN
RELEASE: DECEMBER
ORIGIN: JAPAN

Creature Shock is the handiwork of UK developer Argonaut, who found fame (and infamy) with the SNES Super FX chip. This is altogether a more moody use of graphics with digitised renders of creepy 'living' corridors and huge monsters popping out of nowhere. But when playing, it seemed the game was a bit too linear.



GODZILLA

GODZILLA
BY TOHO
SATURN
RELEASE: DECEMBER
ORIGIN: JAPAN



Japan's favourite monster defender steps into his own home-wrecking masterpiece, in a game that combines the very worst graphics with the very best idea — stopping Godzilla crush his way across Tokyo, and a host of other monsters. Sadly, the amount of Japanese text makes it currently unplayable for us brits.

QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

VARIOUS

BY: SEGA

32X

RELEASE: 1996

ORIGIN: JAPAN





Sources at Sega reveal plans that should excite, or at least placate, the nation's many legions of 32X owners. Sorry, dozens. Apparently, there are plans to convert more Saturn games as Virtua Fighter has been a triumph and a commercial success. Rumour-wise the names 'Bug' and 'Daytona' are being banded about, making the 32X the smartest money move in the £100 console division.

MAGIC SPONGE

FIFA '96

BY: EA

SATURN

RELEASE: DECEMBER

ORIGIN: UK

We apologise for not bringing you a Fifa Saturn review this month, as the game just missed our editorial deadline. Well, not quite. An almost



complete copy of the game came into our possession, but with a couple of bugs still remaining, EA understandably didn't want us to review it. But as the game may still be debuting just as this mag appears on the shelves, we'd just like to say we're sorry we didn't get the chance to say the game was very nice indeed.



THOR BLIMEY

LEGEND OF THOR

BY: SEGA

SATURN

RELEASE: SPRING 1996

ORIGIN: JAPAN

Ignore the crappy headline, Thor is going to one of the most desirable titles of 1996. The original team at Ancient have put the basic mechanics of the game in place, which are much like the first game. It's the graphics and sound, which already look stunning, which mark this game out amongst RPGs. A full work-in-progress very soon.







OPEN SEASON

SCOTTISH OPEN

BY: CORE

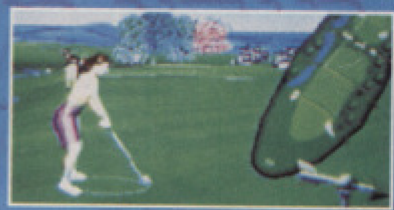
SATURN

RELEASE: FEBRUARY

ORIGIN: UK

The story of Virtual Scottish Open, Core's long-running golf saga, takes a happy twist this month with shots of the near-complete version, due, according to Core, in February and definitely reviewed in our next issue. The game seems to have undergone some major cosmetic changes since we featured the prototype Tee-Off game well over a year ago. The Saturn really needs a good golf game, so it's fingers crossed.





KNIGHT GAMES

CLOCKWORK KNIGHT PUZZLE

BY: SEGA

SATURN

RELEASE: UNCONFIRMED

ORIGIN: JAPAN

Clockwork Knight seems to be more than a 2-dimensional concept for Sega, who have worked the Pepperachou character into a new puzzle game that bears many of the hallmarks of Hudsonsoft's Bomberman game series. The trusty (or is that rusty?) hero pushes exploding balls around simple forced 3-D mazes, destroying the enemies he met in the platform game. If that doesn't sound exciting enough, consider a possible twelve-player option, with the screen teeming with bomb-laying knights. More as we know it.





TAKE MY BREATH AWAY

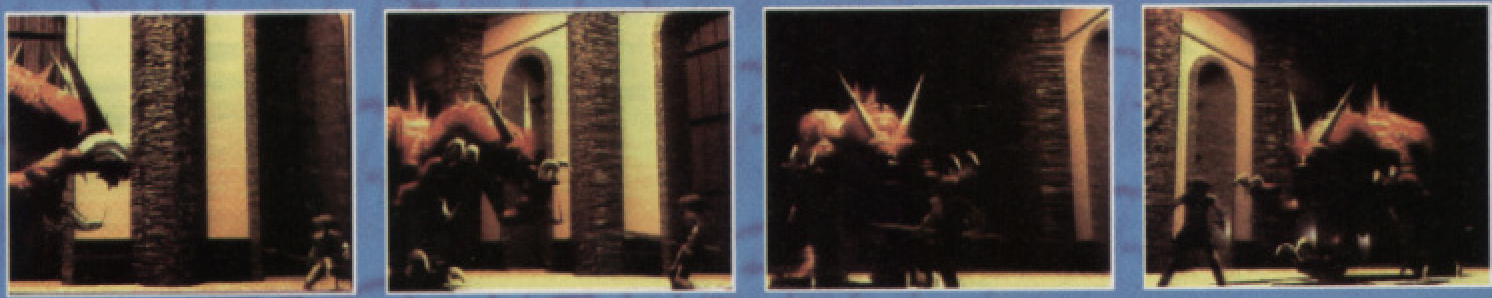
TITLE: UNKNOWN

BY: GAME ARTS

SATURN

RELEASE: MARCH '96

ORIGIN: JAPAN





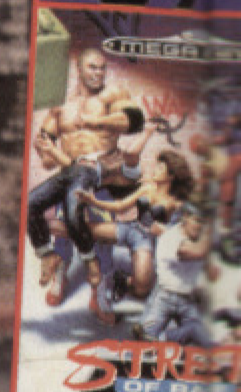


This stunning sequence of shots comes from an untitled, but extremely exciting, RPG project undertaken by Game Arts. This renowned developer has produced some exceptional Sega games in the past, but has been very quiet on Saturn. However, if their RPG plays anything like this looks, they'll be the toast of 1996.

SEGA RETRO COMPO!

Encouraged by their recent success blagging a Saturn and a 32X for Mean Machines compos, Gus, Marcus and Steve decided to pull the old balaclavas on once more for another raid on Sega's goodie lock-up. Crouching, Virtua Cop-style, behind a packing crate full of Master Systems, the gang waited for the dustcart to arrive. Before the dustmen could pack the crates and head for the landfill site, they were knocked out and their vehicle commandeered. With Gus at the wheel, Sega's warehouse gates were ram-raided. Steve and Marcus led the way, stuffing their swag sacks with anything they could find. Soon, however, the awful truth dawned – this was the wrong address! All the Saturn gear was packed in a lock-up on the other side of town – the dustcart was visiting this place because it was where Sega stashed their old rubbish! Lumbered with a ton of hot gear they had to shift fast, the team decided there was only one option – a competition. So here it is folks, the chance to win a ton of brand new stuff from yesteryear – the cream of Sega's vaults.





To be in with a chance of winning some of these classic goodies, send us an answer to the following question. If your answer is one of those picked, you'll be up for one of our prize bundles. Or nicked for handling stolen goods.

Simply tell us:

HOW MANY HEDGEHOGS DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A LIGHT BULB?





Put your entries on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope, and send them to our editorial address marked SPIKY FUN. All entries must be received by second post on 24th January 1996. The usual competition rules apply and multiple entries will be fed to Gus's underpants.

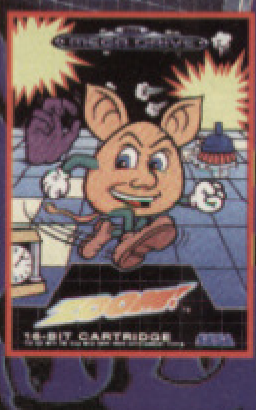
The top ten funniest answers will win a prize – the amount of stuff you get lumbered with depends on how many chortles you raise in the office. Good luck.











FIRST PRIZE:
A Megadrive
7 Megadrive games (Streets of Rage II, Eternal Champions, Sword of Vermilion, Phantasy Star II, Zoom!, Samurai Showdown and Cheese Cat-Astrophe)
An Arcade Power Stick
A Sonic and Knuckles denim jacket
A Sega woolly hat
A Sega turntable slipmat
A Sega lunch box
3 XL Sega t-shirts (Ristar, Lifeguard Potential and Williams)





SECOND PRIZE:
A Mega-CD
2 Sega infa red control pads
A Sega turntable slipmat
3 XL Sega t-shirts (Ristar, Lifeguard Potential and Williams)
A Sega lunch box
A pair of Sonic roller boots (size 5)

THIRD PRIZE:
5 Master System games (PGA Tour Golf, Zool, Streets of Rage II, The Lion King and James Pond II)
A Master System Lucky Dimes Caper box set
A Sega turntable slipmat
3 XL Sega t-shirts (Ristar, Lifeguard Potential and Williams)
A Sega lunch box
A 12" Sonic the Hedgehog single

FOURTH PRIZE:
2 Game Gear games (Sonic Chaos and Sonic Triple Trouble)
A Sega turntable slipmat
3 XL Sega t-shirts (Ristar, Lifeguard Potential and Williams)

FIFTH PRIZE:
2 Game Gear games (Sonic Chaos ad Sonic Triple Trouble)
A Sega turntable slipmat
3 XL Sega t-shirts (Ristar, Lifeguard Potential and Williams)

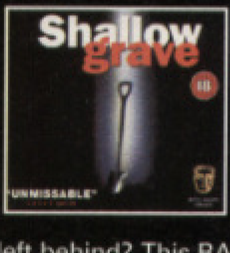
SIXTH PRIZE:
2 Game Gear games (Sonic Chaos and Sonic Triple Trouble)
A Sega turntable slipmat
3 XL Sega t-shirts (Ristar, Lifeguard Potential and Williams)

THE REMAINING FOUR WINNERS WILL EACH RECEIVE A RISTAR T-SHIRT.

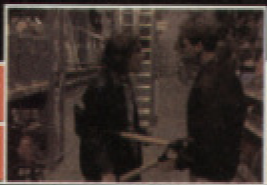
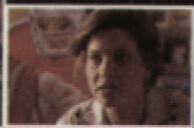
VIDEO CD REVIEWS

We cast a critical eye over the latest Saturn-compatible Video CDs...

SHALLOW GRAVE (1995)



The release of this acclaimed movie three months prior to its appearance on sell-thru VHS is quite a coup for the developing Video CD format. A day after a mysterious stranger (Keith Allen) moves into a shared house he dies of an overdose, leaving the remaining three flatmates with a series of dilemmas – how do they dispose of the body, and what do they do with the suitcase full of banknotes the stranger has left behind? This BAFTA-award winning film really highlights the very best low-budget British film-making has to offer, and the best in Video CD with some well-packaged, well encoded discs. Recommended.

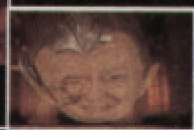



CERTIFICATE:	18
PRICE	£19.99

GAMESMASTER GORE SPECIAL



If Channel 4 screened this after your bed time then here's your chance to join Dominik Diamond, Patrick Moore and, er, Dave Perry for a look at the goriest and perviest games around. If you overlook the programme's curious slant towards the Atari Jaguar and such 'well-known' titles as Katsumi Ninja then it's actually quite amusing. Freed from the shackles of early evening transmission, the programme takes on the character of an annoying younger cousin who sits in the corner of your room torturing a small pet with a pen knife. Good fun, but already slightly dated content-wise and marred by some poor encoding.

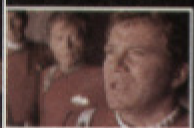



CERTIFICATE:	18
PRICE	£12.99

STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER (1989)



While William Shatner's direction of the fifth Trek film was taut and largely well-paced, the story he co-devised left a lot to be desired. The Enterprise and its crew are commandeered by a renegade Vulcan who uses his enormous mental powers to guide the ship to a rendezvous with God. I'm sure it won't be ruining too much to reveal that the bloke they all eventually meet isn't completely bona fide. What would God need with the Enterprise anyway? The TV show-style plot, together with an over-intense Kirk/Spock/McCoy relationship, conspire to make this hard work. These pan and scan discs are for Trekkers only.

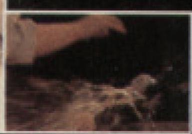



CERTIFICATE:	18
PRICE	£17.99

PENN AND TELLER – DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME



In case they've passed you by, the bizarre Penn and Teller are American magicians who specialise in dangerous stunts and illusions which have earned them a certain infamy and an expulsion from the Magic Circle. This US-originated programme links their most outrageous feats of large scale and close-up magic into a cabaret-style show that would probably turn Paul Daniels blue. Especially when they tell you how it's all done. There is an attraction in using the Saturn's freeze frame to figure out how someone can survive being run over by a lorry, but the dodgy encoding is frustrating.

CERTIFICATE:	PG
PRICE	£12.99

THE POLICE: OUTLANDOS TO SYNCHRONICITIES



These well produced discs illustrate The Police's development from pseudo-reggae outfit to sophisticated stadium-fillers by highlighting their best live performances. The footage comes from a variety of sources (television shows, ropey concert films and the band's own Super 8 films) and what could have been a mish mash is smoothed out by interlinking interviews with band-members Andy Summers, Stewart Copeland and Sting. Unlikely to sway anyone who doesn't remember the group, but current Sting fans would be well advised to take a look.




CERTIFICATE:	15
PRICE	£19.99

THUNDERBALL (1965)



Sean Connery's fourth outing as James Bond was the series' first in widescreen, which makes these pan and scan discs something of a disappointment. That aside, the remastered print quality and encoding standard is good across this film, which depicts 007's struggle to prevent the unseen Ernst Stavro Blofeld and his Italian mafia henchman Emilio Largo (Adolfo Celi) capturing a nuclear bomb and holding the world to ransom. This adds some superb underwater photography into the usual mix of guns, girls and gadgets, and the Tom Jones theme is a classic. Philips have also issued the disappointing Octopussy (1983). Further James Bond Video CDs will be available in 1996.




CERTIFICATE:	18
PRICE	£19.99

you can't buy this.



About to buy a new games machine?
Is it worth waiting?
Yes.
32 bit CD machines are fine, but they don't cut it where it really counts.
They just don't have the power.
This does. 64 bit power. Nintendo Ultra 64.
The speed of silicon cartridge.
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After all, nothing this good comes easy.
But do you really want something less powerful?

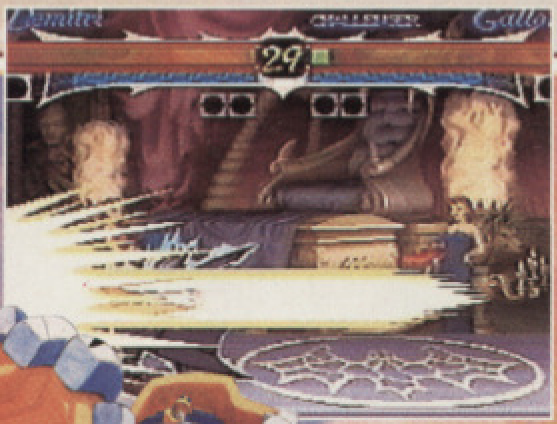
Nintendo®

NINTENDO ULTRA 64™

WAIT FOR IT...

PROJECT	VAMPIRE HUNTER
PUBLISHER	VIRGIN
INITIATED	MARCH 1995
RELEASE	DECEMBER 95
FORMAT	SATURN
DEVELOPERS	CAPCOM

It's twelve hours from London. Tokyo is arguably the greatest city of the Far East, a bizarre Christmas tree metropolis symbolising the world's most dynamic economy. And Tokyo is to games what Rome is to religion. Gus was making the pilgrimage along with two other EMAP journalists, courtesy of Virgin, with the specific privilege of visiting Capcom – one of the game industry's biggest and most enduring companies.







Capcom will be best known to MEAN MACHINES readers as a producer of arcade games and home conversions, but in Japan the company has a wider sphere of influence with a substantial merchandising business and arcades of their own. In the game stores' book sections you'll find comprehensive anthologies of Capcom artwork, or detailed guides to Darkstalkers and Streetfighter Zero [Alpha in the UK]. The company has also dabbled in film and animation, in an effort to strengthen their Streetfighter brand. Quizzing them on their reaction to the movie produced a blank and rather lukewarm response.

And until this point in time, this seemed to be their response to next generation consoles, with nothing except a conversion of the unfortunate Streetfighter: The Movie game. But things are on the rise, and Capcom's might is emphatically demonstrated by their skyscraping offices on a 43rd floor of a high-rise in the heart of Tokyo. MEAN MACHINES are the first foreign journalists to visit Capcom since they made the move from Osaka, on the west of the Southern Island, to the Shinjuku-ju area of Tokyo. The R&D department for both arcade and home projects is still based there, although the head of planning, Mr Minami was available for interview through their press representative, Mr Yamaguchi. They were most eager to talk about their next Saturn games to be released through Virgin in the UK: Vampire Hunter and Streetfighter Alpha, fighting games that push back the frontiers of Saturn combat gaming. And that frontier has only just been set, by Capcom's own X-Men:Children of the Atom, reviewed this month...




CAPCOM SPEAK

Gus and Gary Harrod from Maximum magazine put the following questions to Akio Sakai of Consumer Sales, and Tatsuya Minami, head of planning and design, at Capcom's R&D division in Osaka. An extended version of these interviews can be found in issue three of Maximum magazine.

Q: Looking at your planned release schedule, your lineup for Saturn seems to differ from Playstation. Why?

A: We think Playstation users are older, maybe over 18. Saturn users we think are younger, in the traditional console owners bracket.

Q:Will this affect the sort of games you produce for the console?

A:Saturn users, we believe, are more likely to play arcade games and are more likely to want conversions of these arcade games. We get the data for this.

Q:Does this mean we won't see the conversion of Playstation titles like Biohazard [a polygon RPG called Resident Evil in UK]?

A:Well, we think the Saturn hardware is not so good for polygon 3-D games like Biohazard, and is more suited to 2-D games. There would be problems involved in converting to the Saturn, but we are considering it.

Q:How long does it take to convert your CPS II [Capcom's arcade board] games from coin-op to Saturn?

A:It takes about a year to convert each game from one to the other. There are various pro-

VAMPIRE HUNTER







CREEPING HORROR

Capcom have an affinity for horror games which was first expressed in the classic Ghouls and Ghosts, a platform shoot 'em up that was a major arcade hit in 1987, and later a Megadrive classic. Later their attention turned to the huge success generated by Streetfighter. But as the direction of Capcom games is defined by the influence of their R&D department, a return to horror and, as they put it, "creatures existing in the subconscious", led to the development of Darkstalkers in the arcade in 1994. Darkstalkers uses the popular monsters from folklore across the globe, and reproduces them in a manga-style setting with sumptious 256 colour backdrops and meticulous hand-drawn animation. The attraction of using totally original characters is the freedom to animate and characterise as they desire. Contrast this with their Marvel titles: X-Men and Marvel Super Heroes, where the consent of Marvel (not always easy to obtain) was required at each stage of the design process. Capcom also contrast Darkstalkers with gruesome games like Mortal Kombat. Despite the horror theme, there is little gore within the game. This is only partly in response to public concern about violence in games. More importantly, the quality of the gameplay is paramount, rather than disguising poor programming and lack of playability with a few gallons of blood. The horror element of Darkstalkers is put to use to create fantasy gameplay and the kind of moves and animations not feasible in games like Streetfighter.









gramming tasks to undertake.

Q:Were the same team who created the coin-op involved in the console conversion?

A:No.

Q:Is any of the source code from the arcade games used in the Saturn versions?

A:Yes.

Q:Have their been any significant compromises converting, for example, X-Men: Children of the Atom? Anything major lost?

A:We had to reduce the number of patterns [animations] by a third to fit the game into the main memory of the Saturn. This means it isn't perfectly fluid animation. If you have been playing the coin-op for a considerable time you may notice the reduction or removal of some patterns. We do have a problem converting some games perfectly to the Saturn.

Q:Has the PAL conversion begun? Our readers are concerned that UK versions of the game run without borders or speed compromises.

A:We will try to make it as fast as the NTSC version.

Q:Is it true that Vampire Hunter will be released before the original Darkstalkers?

A:Night Warriors [Darkstalkers 2's title in Japan] will be released before Darkstalkers, but the difference will be less than two weeks. The reason is the problems we had converting the Playstaton version, which we didn't have with the Saturn. Originally the plan was to release Playstation Darkstalkers in April but it fell behind, hence the decision to take the later Vampire Hunter straight to Saturn. We get the user response to release our software as soon as possible, which we have to do, and we also have Darkstalkers 3 lined up for the arcade.

Q:Two extra characters appear in the sequel that aren't in

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

The scenario of Darkstalkers concerns twelve fantasy fighters, one of which is Donovan, the Dark Hunter, dedicated to ending the terrifying power of the other Darkstalkers. The version of Vampire Hunter we saw in Japan was quite incomplete, with six characters and their respective backdrops functioning. However, the game is scheduled for a December release, so the game structure is well in place. Here is an overview of those six characters, and some of their attacks...



MORRIGAN

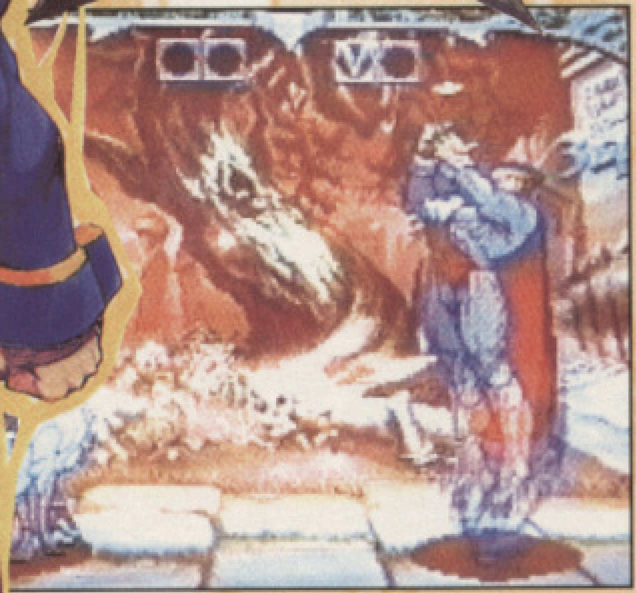
A succubus, or demon, who feeds on human blood while hiding in beautiful female form. Morrigan is one of the most bewitching girl characters ever to appear in gaming, which explains her huge fan base in Japan – comprising men and women! Given the chance, she reveals her less attractive batty form. Speciality attacks include creating mirror images of herself, and blasting across the screen on a beam of fire.

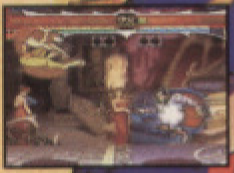




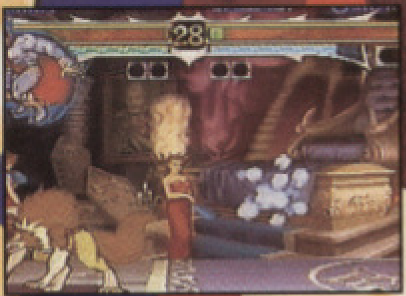
DEMITRI



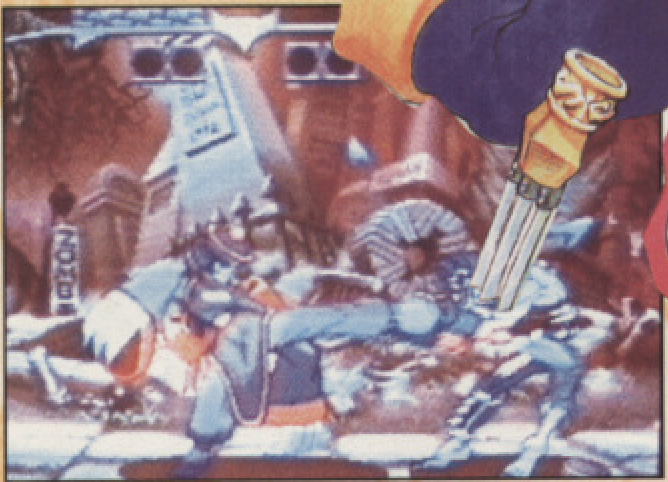








The Prince of Darkness, the embodiment of the most terrifying monster of all, Vampire. Demitri fights in the bed chamber of his Gothic lair. He's lithe and elegant, capable of some wonderful aerobatics and the ability to turn into a puff of smoke to reappear above his opponent's head, fangs bared. When empowered, Demitri glows with vampiric energy, releasing balls of demonic fire.



LEI LEI

Lei Lei is one of two characters added from the original Darkstalkers game. The first impression of The Chinese Ghost is of a sweet little girl, but Capcom have hidden her devastating and grotesque claws inside that charming kimono. Her special moves are some of the most bizarre.





the original Darkstalkers game. What other improvements have been made?

A:Consider Vampire Hunter as an upgrade of Darkstalkers. When we created Darkstalkers we wanted to created characters different from other games. No other programmers have considered using monster characters in a fighting game.

Q:Do the characters in the second game have more moves than those in the original?

A:The original Darkstalkers used 128MB for all characters, Vampire hunter uses 256MB in total. That means an average of 500 extra patterns for all characters. I cannot say how many extra moves have been added, but there are the extra moves.

Q:In Darkstalkers the original characters are based on recognisable monsters. Where did the two boss creatures – a robot and fiery man [Pyron] – come from? Are they from folklore?

A:The robot is called "dogoo" in Japan. It is like a doll that people have at home. People sometimes like to say it was brought to Earth.

Q:What research did you do to create your monster characters?

A:We didn't have to worry too much as they are very popular around the world. We feel you get closer to the characters if you know them.

Q:In Vampire Hunter there are three female characters. Do you like to add female characters, or are you forced to by public opinion?

A:If we add female characters, it is very popular. Have you ever been to the 'Cost-play' show in Japan? People dress up as Morrigan or Felicia to play the games.

Q:Can you tell us a bit about Incredible Toons, a game we know very little about?



GALLON

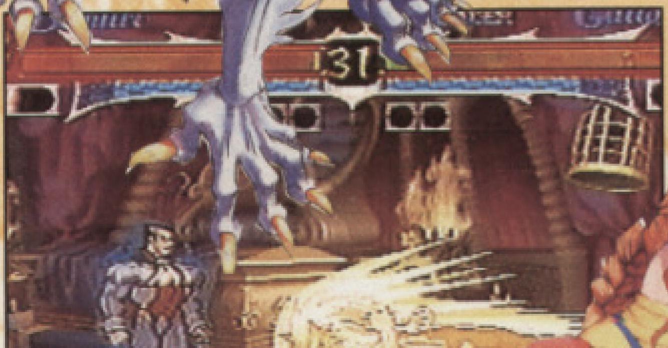
The Werewolf, whose fierce style befits the spirit of Blanka from Streetfighter and Wolverine from X-Men. Indeed, like Wolverine, Gallon is capable of a launching attack, one which turns him into a blinding beam of light. His talons are also able to create fire from air. His most powerful attack produces a huge fire wolf which consumes opponents whole.



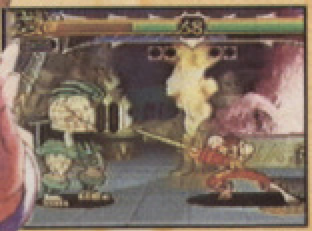


ZABEL

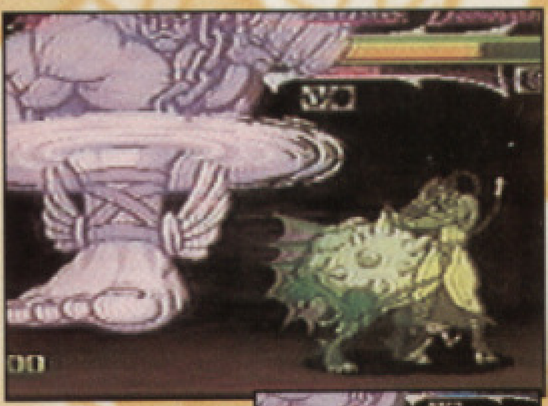
Our own entrant, the Zombie who sports the Union Jack and hangs around a misty cemetery. Zabel wouldn't look out of place in Carnaby Street with those biker boots and that guitar. He's determined not to do the traditional Brit thing in this tournament and come in last. Zabel is fond of customising his body parts, creating huge buzzsaws from his various limbs. He's also got a strange lumpy mate who chomps up the opposition. Victory is rewarded with a demonic solo on his ghostly 'axe'.

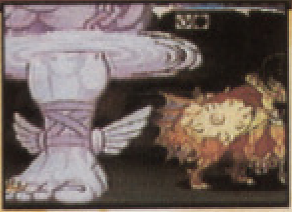


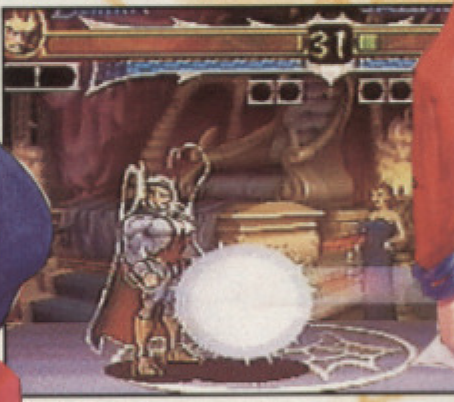


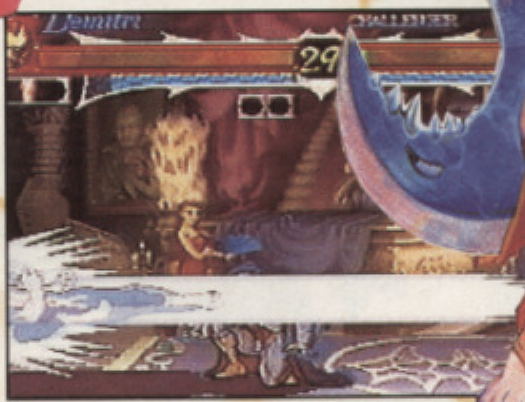














DONOVAN

The Dark Hunter. The figurehead for the game and the one character to choose if you are on the side of right and good. Donovan's mode of attack involves two magical weapons: a huge magical sword and a necklace of strange over-sized beads. But he has no shortage of other attacks, invoking other protective spirits, releasing clouds of fire, ice and one huge god whose vast foot descends from the heavens.

A:Incredible Toons is a puzzle game which is an upgrade version of The Incredible Machine [pc game]. Each screen has a topic which must be solved. You can choose the item with which to solve the task to go to the next stage.

Q:In the original, mechanical items were used, but the Capcom version uses Capcom characters. How did you change the mechanical animation to character animation?

A:You want to know why we changed it?

Q:Yes why, and how easy or difficult is was.

A:The graphic of the Incredible Toons has become animation already, so we didn't have any problem converting it. We took the toons from other games, and had no problem with the idea of the Incredible Machine.

Q:Which characters did you use?

A:We changed the items to characters from Ghouls and Ghosts.

Q:How complete is the game? We understand it was sent back to be re-planned.

A:We're not going to replan back from the original as we have the basic concept. The game is almost complete, but since we changed to the characters of Ghouls and Ghosts, we've had to go back and do that.

Q:So it was decided late on to use the characters of Ghouls and Ghosts?

A:Yes.

Q:Why have you chosen to do a distribution deal with Virgin, when previously your titles were released through Acclaim?

A:We think Europe is a hard area to sell games, and we think that software must be sold by English speaking people in the UK. We haven't got the network, and we've heard that Virgin will be most effective.

THE OTHER DARKSTALKERS

Details and artwork of the other eight, as yet unfinished, characters due in the Saturn game.



VICTOR

Capcom indulge their love of huge lumbering characters with a trendy update of Frankenstein's monster. Sporting the classic neck bolts and a spiky hairdo , Victor's tactics resemble the likes of Zangief from Streetfighter.





ANAKARIS

The mythology of ancient Egypt is pillaged to create Anakaris, the Mummy character. You'll find some outrageous specials incorporating sarcophagi, bandages and even the seperation of Anarkis into two.

FELICIA

Strangely out of place, Felicia is closer to the fantasy manga portrayals of women, but her cuteness makes her one of the game's most endearing characters. She has, naturally, the speed and agility of a cat.

BISHAMON

The (perhaps inevitable) Samurai character, Bishamon is one of the mean ugly guys. He uses a mystical sword for many of his attacks, but is not above enlisting the help of other ghost Samurai.



AULBATH

Aulbath probably owes his appearance to the Creature from the Black Lagoon, as his merman features look decidely rubbery. Water, as you might presume, forms a large part of his repertoire, including washing his opponents up in a tidal wave.



SASQUATCH

Sasquatch, the North American Yeti, is one monster that many actually believe in. However, this greeblie is unlikely to exist in the white hairy form portrayed in Vampire Hunter. Snow and ice feature in his specials, but with a nickname like Big Foot, it's understandable that his pedal attacks are so devastating.



PHOBOS

The inorganic character, popular from Japanese folklore. He uses the beam attacks that feature largely in X-Men, with other guns poking out of every conceivable orifice.

PYRON

The other new character, Pyron, is the most mysterious. A man made of fire, abstract animations of fiery globes and spheres depict his major attacks.

VAMPIRE HUNTER

Q:More effective than Acclaim?

A:We have researched the market carefully. Even someone from Acclaim said Virgin would be the most effective for the job!

Q:What future conversions of arcade titles are planned. Marvel Superheroes?

A:Yes we are planning to convert that.

Q:And what are your plans for future arcade games? Will you use 3-D polygon technology that will compete with Namco and Sega?

A:We are looking at 3-D technology, but it is very expensive. We are trying to surprise with the price of our 3-D games, but we must keep costs down.

Q:Why have your 2-D games retained their popularity in the face of 3-D polygon fighting games?

A:Our games have such smooth animation, just like watching TV. We try to release games with lifelike, fluid animation, like Darkstalkers and X-Men. We think that attracts players.

Q:Do you think your 2-D characters will translate to 3-D polygon games well?

A:No.

Q:So no polygon Ryu then?

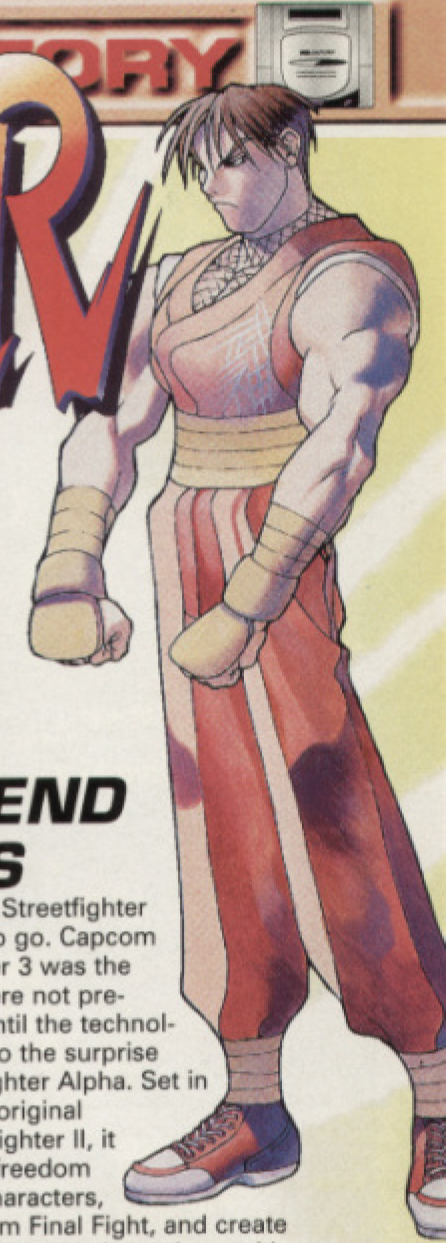
A:We'll be creating new characters for our 3-D games. It really depends on how many polygons we can use. If we compare Virtua Fighter with Virtua Fighter 2, and look at the faces, for example, they're a lot more life-like in VF2. We have to be happy with the detail and realism of such details before we produce these characters in 3-D.

Q:What technology do you need to produce 3-D games?

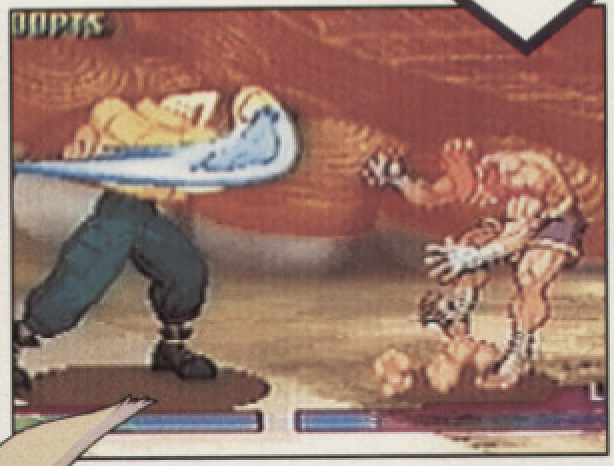
A:We have to research our own 3-D, and R&D are having a few problems getting to grips with it. For example, we have to change from CISC to RISC chips. But we hope to

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA
WARRIORS' DREAMS

PROJECT	STREETFIGHTER ALPHA
PUBLISHER	VIRGIN
INITIATED	MARCH 95
RELEASE	JANUARY 95
FORMAT	SATURN
DEVELOPERS	CAPCOM

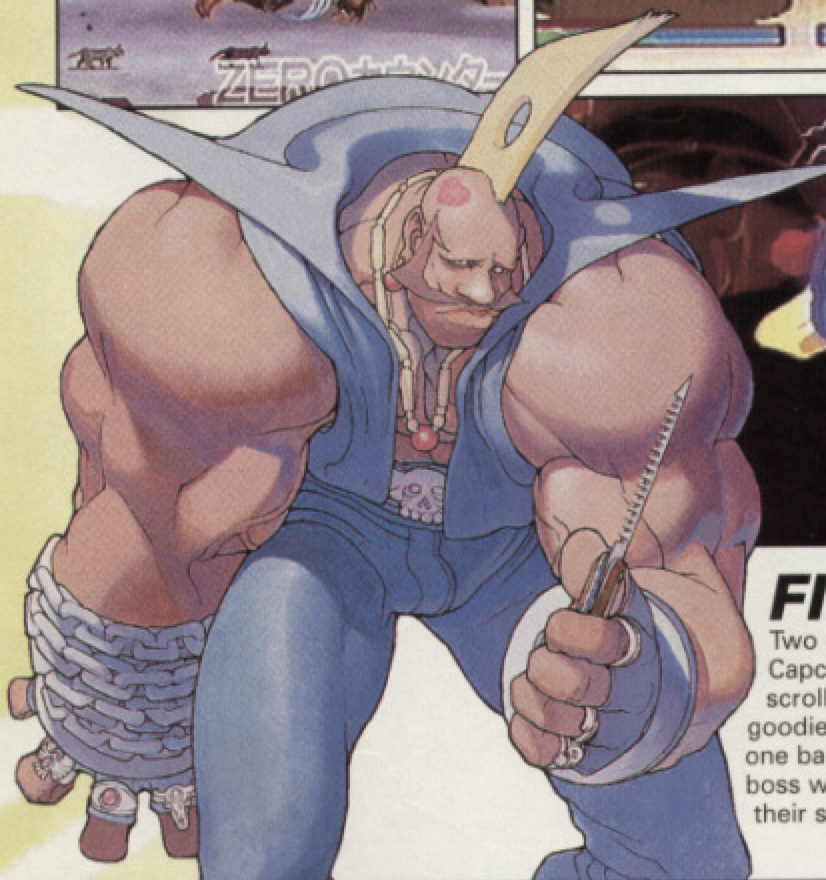






THE LEGEND RETURNS

You might think that the Streetfighter story has nowhere left to go. Capcom realised that Streetfighter 3 was the next logical step, but were not prepared to produce that until the technology was right. This led to the surprise 'step back' with Streetfighter Alpha. Set in the period between the original Streetfighter and Streetfighter II, it gave the R&D team the freedom to pick the best-loved characters, add other characters from Final Fight, and create some new ones. Technically this is up there with Darkstalkers and X-Men, with the added bonus that nothing has been lost in the conversion – Streetfighter Alpha on the Saturn will be complete.











FINAL FIGHTERS

Two of the Alpha characters were in Capcom's Final Fight, a hugely popular scrolling beat 'em up from 1991. There's one goodie: Guy, who was a player character, and one baddie, Sodom, who appeared as a level boss with huge swords. These were chosen for their suitability in a one-on-one fighting game.

eventually produce 3-D games in less time than 2-D games take.

Q:Is game size limited under the CPS II system?

A:Yes, our games are reaching 300MB and that is about the limit.

Q:Capcom produced a stick for the SNES version of Streetfighter II. Is there a plan to create a stick for your Saturn games?

A:Not yet, but we would like to produce such a thing.

Q:Have any of the Streetfighter Alpha characters proved more difficult to convert than the others?

A:No, Streetfighter Alpha was straightforward to convert – everything from the arcade game is present.

Q:Why pick just Guy and Sodom from Final Fight to add to Streetfighter Zero?

A:They were chosen because they were quite popular, especially Guy. With Sodom we could create skills and movement not possible with other characters.

Q:Can we confirm that Streetfighter 3 will be a polygon game?

A:The basic concept is, yes, but we have to carefully consider that the image of Streetfighter may be damaged – we may not call it Streetfighter 3.

Q:But your next arcade title will be a 3-D polygon fighting game?

A:Yes, that is the plan. But Streetfighter 3 is just one of several projects under consideration. We cannot say what will be next.

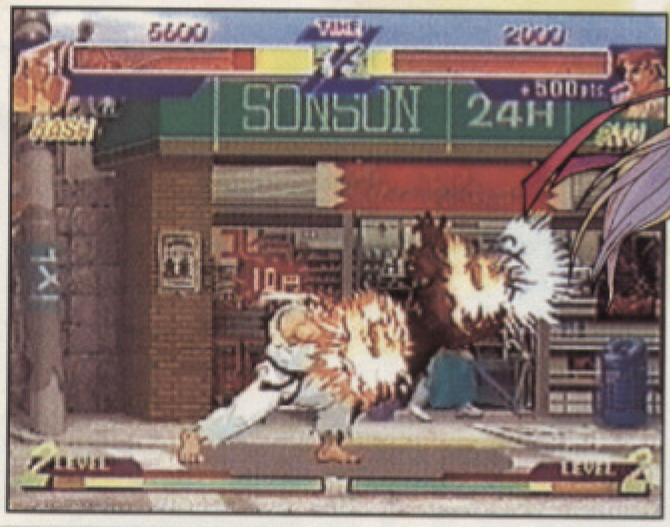
Q:Do you think a 3-D Streetfighter will affect the 2-D games? Would you still release a 2-D Streetfighter game afterwards?

A:Our basic aim is to release games which are interesting – whether they are 2-D or 3-D is irrelevent. We feel the average 3-D game is less interesting than a well-balanced 2-D game.

THE OLD STALWARTS



Those familiar with Streetfighter in its various guises will recognise these core fighters in Streetfighter Alpha. Chun-Li comes from the original Streetfighter II, and many of her attack patterns are the same. Ryu and Ken, the backbone of Streetfighter, had to be included to give the game recognition, but their special attacks benefit from the new power level attacks. M.Bison, known as Vega in Japan, is there, but in a beefier, more muscular form than Streetfighter II. Sagat, a survivor of the original Streetfighter and its sequel, is also entered into this competition.









SUPER HEROES

Capcom's latest coin-op is Marvel Super Heroes, and they gave every indication of it being a Saturn project for 1996. Super Heroes is a major step up from X-Men, although it was made in conjunction with Marvel and takes some of the characters from that game. It adds the most popular and suitable characters from Marvel comics other than X-Men, including Spiderman and the Hulk.





THREE STEPS FROM POWER

The major gameplay change to Streetfighter Alpha is the addition of three power levels. Using special moves and successful combos on your opponent increases the bar at the bottom of the screen. This passes through three phases of power which alter the effect of your attacks, making them progressively more powerful. At their height, your powers can effects an incredible game-stopping super combo which finishes the round in a blaze of glory.





Psylocke kicks some super-hero butt. Not tricky, considering this bloke's obvioulsy been dead for quite a while.

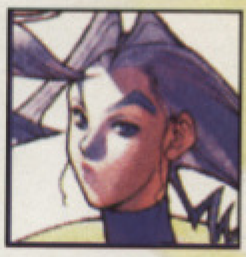
NEW BLOOD

The new characters strut their stuff:

BIRDIE



ROSE



ADON



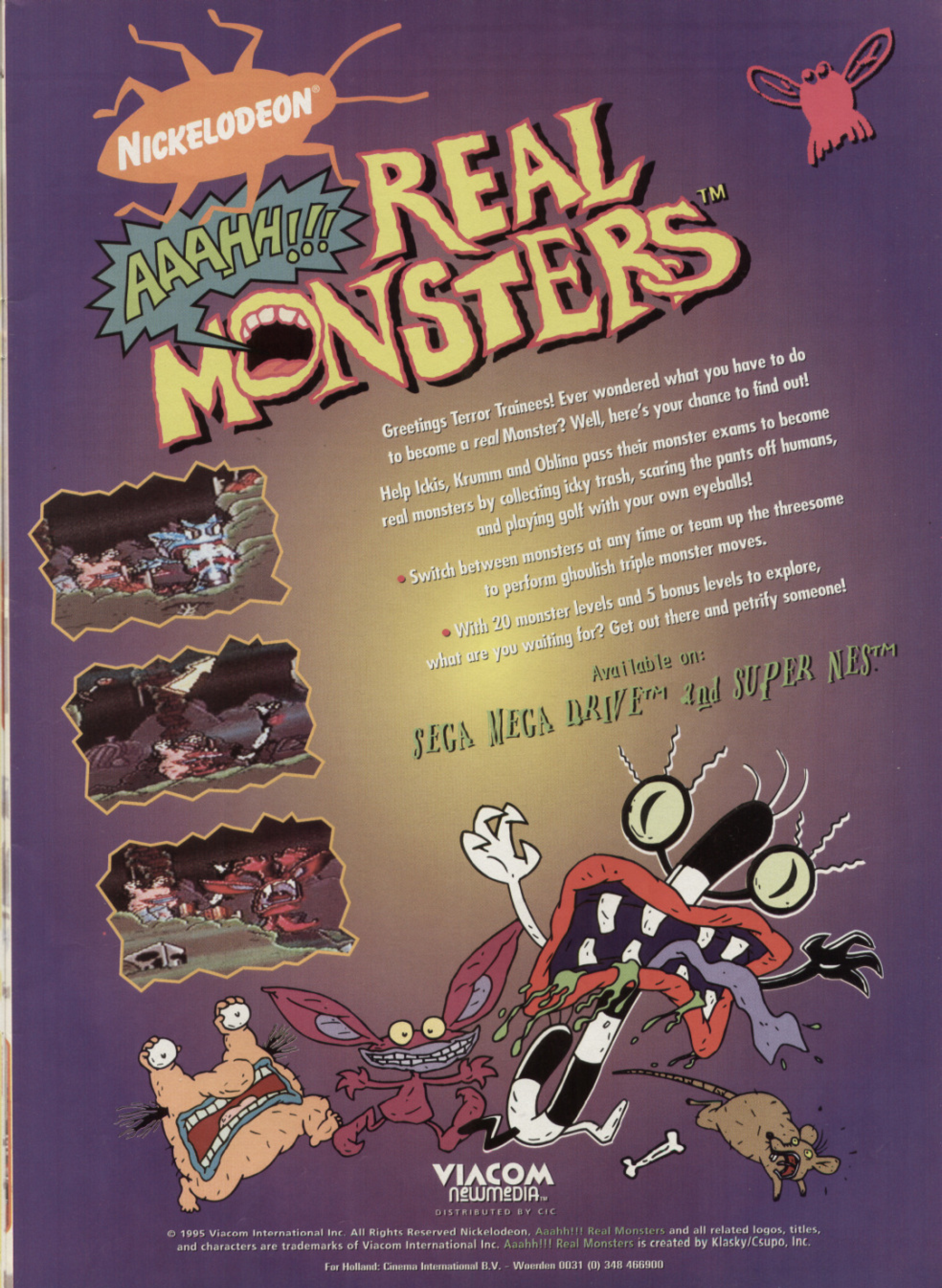
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• Switch between monsters at any time or team up the threesome to perform ghoulish triple monster moves.
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WORK IN PROGRESS

PROJECT
DARK SAVIOR

PUBLISHER
TBA

INITIATED
APRIL '95

RELEASE
SPRING '96

FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
CLIMAX

DARK SAVIOR



He wrote Shining Force. He wrote Shining in the Darkness. He wrote Landstalker. Three names that anyone who knows Sega RPGs will have heard of, and most probably hold in high regard. His name is Kan Naito, he's the President of Climax Entertainment, and he's at the Toshimaen Saturn show in Tokyo.

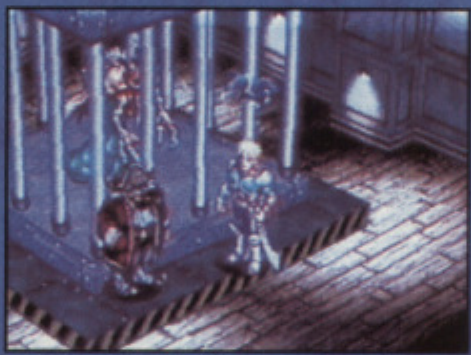
And so is Gus. Kan is happy to demonstrate his new Saturn project, Dark Saviour, and happier still to talk to MEAN MACHINES over drinks at the hotel.

Kan, 28, turns out to be a boy racer – he likes taking sports cars around the Suzuka circuit, he's a radio personality and the boyfriend of a rather glamorous young lady called Rita Takahashi who turns out to be a pop star.

Dark Saviour follows on from Landstalker with the familiar third-person perspective and a main character that looks very much like Landstalker's Nigel. He won't be the only character to play with, as later levels show ogres and girls in the spot-light, as you assemble a Dark Saviour party.

The gameplay features the same mix of platform, puzzle and plot, but the Saturn's spec is being pushed to the full with huge landscapes, built into complex 3-D mazes, and a revolutionary scaling viewpoint system developed by Kan himself.

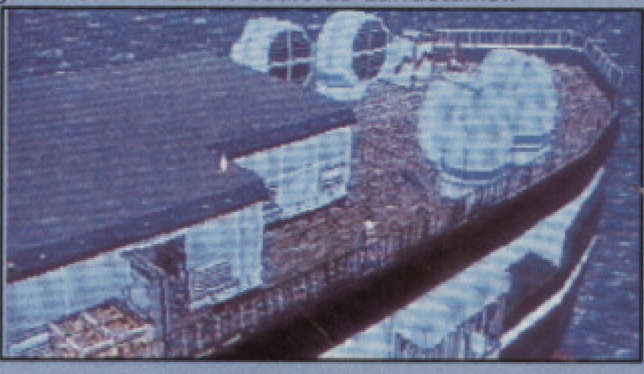
RPGs are massive in Japan, but Climax's offering will be the only game of its type when released in April. Considering the classic Landstalker was never challenged, Dark Saviour may be an unmissable one-off.

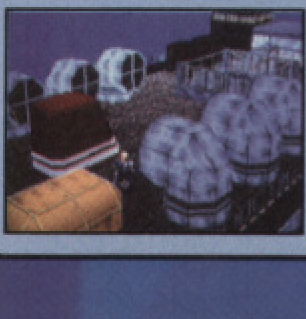




HELLO SAILOR

The initial section of the game is an extremely impressive jaunt around a ship. The detail of the engine room graphics, the flame effects and special effects like the rotating cube bode well for a game on the same scale as Landstalker.



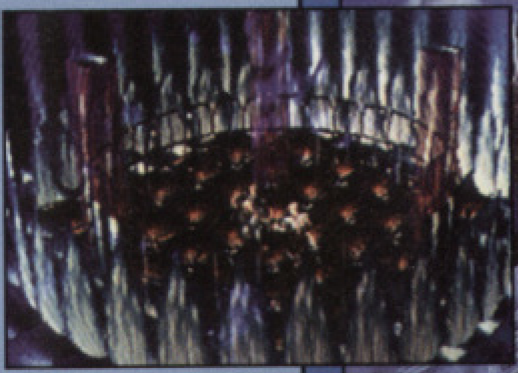


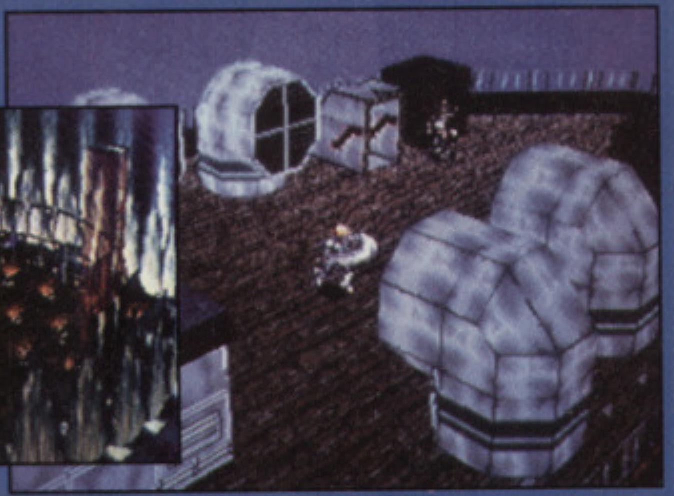


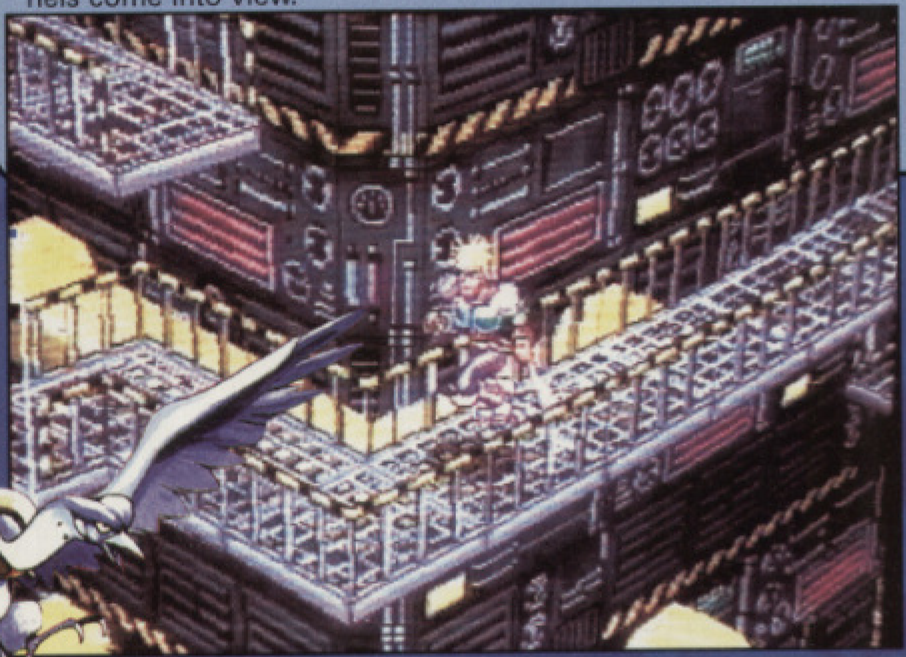


HYPERION TO A SATYR

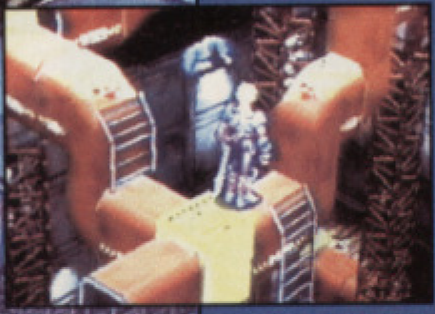
Climax have trademarked Dark Saviour's viewing system as the 'Hyuperion Perspective'. It uses a mixture of sprite images and real polygons to depict an isometric world. The main advancement over Landstalker is the quality of depth of the textured polygons, and the ability to scale and pan the perspective independent of the character movement. This means you can view the action close up — as in the dynamic battle sequences — or lift the 'camera' to view a wider area of the playfield. Dark Saviour also uses Interpolation: a technique in increasing use that prevents foreground textured polygons looking blocky and pixellated. The effect is apparent when large objects like the ship's funnels come into view.

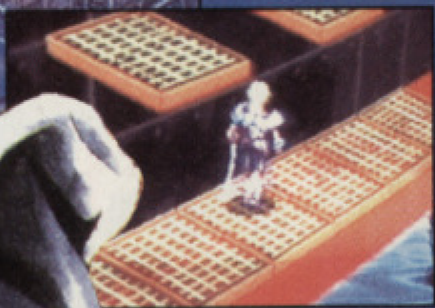














ART FOR ART'S SAKE

This selection of artwork shows how Dark Saviour sticks to the characteristic look of Climax games, which have both a Gothic and manga feel. One artist produces the character sketches off site, which are then hand-traced and animated by the climax staff. Backgrounds are created by taking textures in a photoshop package and patching them into a 3-D tile grid of the levels.



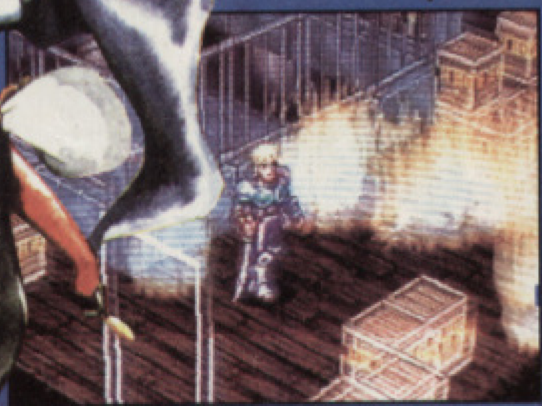




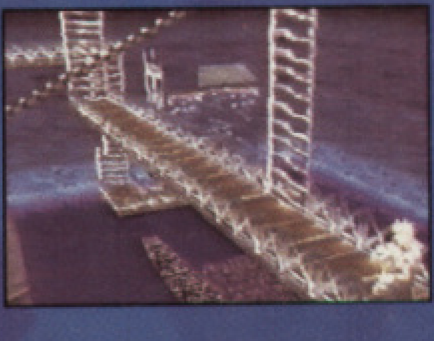




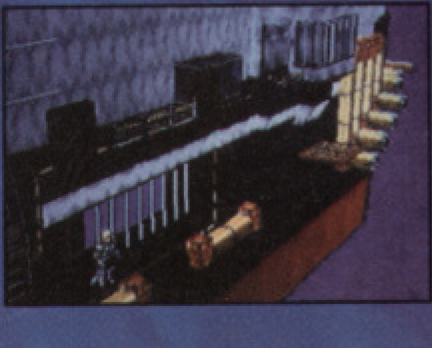








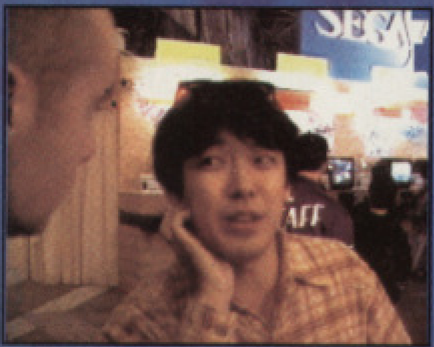
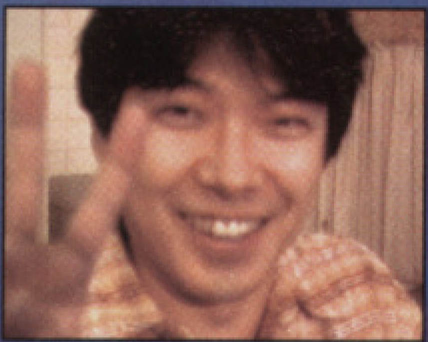




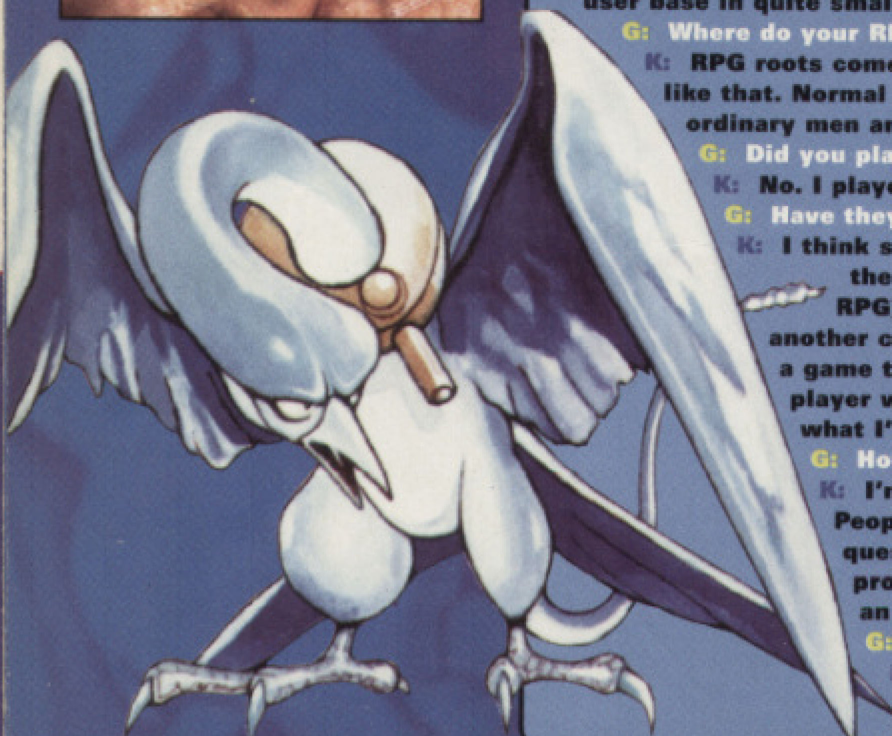


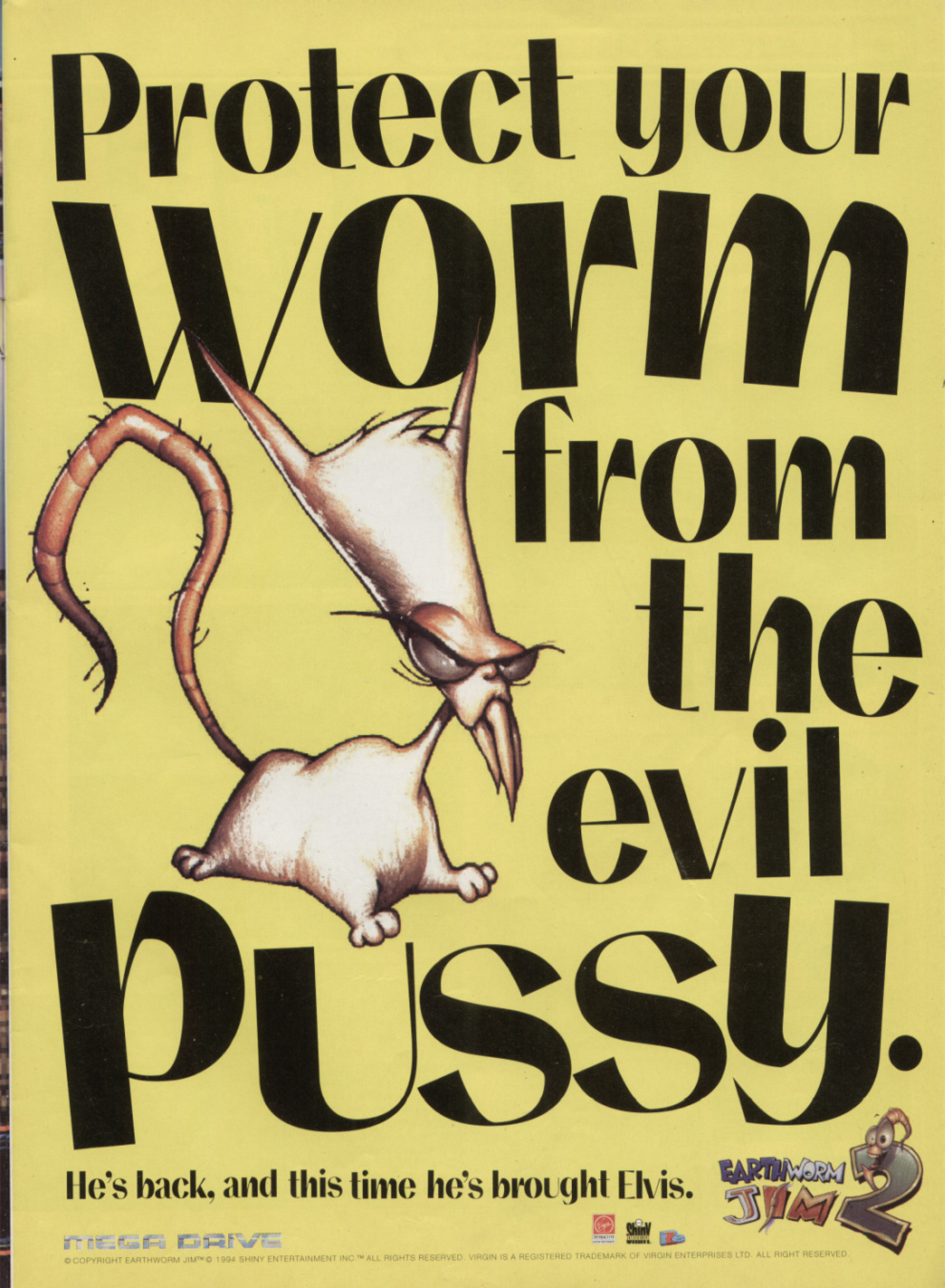
KAN NAITO INTERVIEW



G: have you been to Europe before?
K: Yes, I have been to Spain. And France, 'Le Mans 24 Hours'.
G: You've been to Le Mans!
K: Yes, I like driving.
G: So you go to Suzuka [Japanese formula track].
K: Yes, I drive there myself. Sports cars: Honda.
G: You say you are doing a driving game for the Playstation. Is your personal enthusiasm integrated into the game?
K: Yes, I want to put buses into the game, and a truck!
G: You're going to put buses into your game?
K: Yes, and Vespa scooters.
G: What do you think of other driving games on the consoles from say Namco or Sega?
K: I like Sega Daytona USA, and Ridge Racer on Playstation.
G: Do you think they're near to real driving?
K: I think Namco's game is very real. But we don't know the secret Playstation spec. Many third parties do not know the secret of the system. Making a racing game is very difficult.
G: How have Sega been with development? Have they provided secret specs?
K: Saturn have many third parties — each has equal position. Sega treat all of us the same. All companies get the same information, the same libraries, the same hints. Sony have a personal interest in certain companies and give them special help.
G: Landstalker was a big hit in Britain. Did Sega come to you and ask you to produce Dark Saviour on Saturn?
K: Not just this particular game. Sega have asked for games on the Saturn.
G: They wanted the name. A 'Climax' game for Saturn?
K: Yes, but a role-playing game. I have plans for another game on Saturn.
G: Can you say any more?
K: About five years ago we produced Shining in the Darkness on Megadrive. Many people have asked for a sequel. We'll make Shining in the Darkness 2 for Saturn next year.
G: A 3-D dungeon game?
K: Yes.
G: Have you got a deal with Sega to publish Dark Saviour in Japan?
K: We'll publish it ourself.
G: What about Europe?
K: I don't know about a European distributor. Maybe Sega.
G: Is it the same people working on Dark Saviour as Landstalker?
K: Landstalker was 90% programmed by myself, Dark Saviour is much bigger with five people working on the team.
G: When did you start?
K: April.
G: And when will you complete?
K: Very soon. I want to finish it in January so it can be released in April.
G: Dark Saviour as an RPG on the Saturn is quite unusual. Why don't more people make RPGs like yourself?
K: I think RPGs are difficult to do. Japan has many software companies, but many are very small. They don't have the resources to develop RPGs, which are not quick to produce like shoot 'em ups or platform games. At the moment no one is making the commitment necessary for long term developments. You put a lot of time and effort into it, and there isn't the user base.
G: But you are a small developer and you make them.
K: Because I like RPGs and many people want them. We enjoy making them. And although the user base in quite small, the demand is great because the choice of RPGs is so small.
G: Where do your RPGs come from?
K: RPG roots come from table top games like Dungeons and Dragons. But I don't see them like that. Normal RPG characters are fighters and magicians, but I think that they can be ordinary men and women rather than special characters. We are unconventional.
G: Did you play Dungeons and Dragons?
K: No. I played RPGs on Apple computers, adventures like Wizardry, text adventures.
G: Have they inspired your games?
K: I think so, yes. But we don't produce the games that I want to make, but what the gamesplaying public want to play. Dragon Warriors [a classic SNES RPG] sold three million copies, and there have been many imitations. In another company, a designer might come up with a personal character and create a game that pleases himself. At Climax, we produce the characters that the player wants. I'm always thinking what will they want next year — and that's what I'm programming.
G: How do you know what they want?
K: I'm a radio personality. For about three years I've done a show on TBS. People send me postcards saying 'I know programming'. I answer their questions about games and software. Also questions on how to become a programmer and get into the games industry. My show goes out for half an hour on Sunday night.
G: Have you any plans to come to Britain?
K: Maybe next year, but I'm too busy with Dark Saviour at the moment. Maybe for the next ECTS!




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worm
from
the
evil
pussy.
He's back, and this time he's brought Elvis.
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MEGA DRIVE
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PREVIEWS



BY: SEGA US

GAME TYPE: SHOOT 'EM UP

PLAYERS: 1

PRICE: TBA

RELEASE: TBA

COMPLETE

GHEN

There is a global 'market' for games amongst software publishers that sees one company publish a title in one country and another in other territories. Ghen War is an example of this. Programmed for Sega of America, under their Away Team label (like Bug), it's due for release in Japan through Virgin.

Ghen War is yet to find a publisher in the UK and may not, even though the game is already out in America. However, the title appears to be worthy of some interest. It's very American in a Crystal Dynamics sort of way, as this type of game is always preceded with a long, sprawling video intro revealing the plot and providing work for dozens of crap American actors.

Watch the opening and you get a sci-fi scenario that involves interplanetery refugees called the Ghen, who previously saught refuge on Earth from their own world's wars. Despite a horrific reptilian appearance, they were quite friendly and offered all kinds of technological assistance, including a bio-insert that cured all diseases.

However, a joint mission to a mining world reveals a secret Ghen project, and its discovery provokes a pre-emptive strike on a human starship. You set off from Earth with orders to destroy the Ghen and find out just what they're up to...

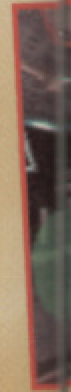
LIGHT AND MAGIC

The intro has plenty of ham acting, but more than a few intriguing effects. One is the combination of rendered graphics with video footage, like the human face of the commander merged with his computer-generated space suit.









TEXTURE TOPPING

Interpolation, that programming technique of the moment, is much in evidence in Ghen War. Enemies made out of polygons do not pixellate at close range, and are animated most impressively. Equally slick are the electric pyrotechnics that flit across the surface of damaged vehicles.



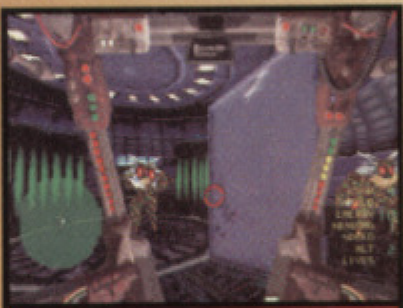
WAR



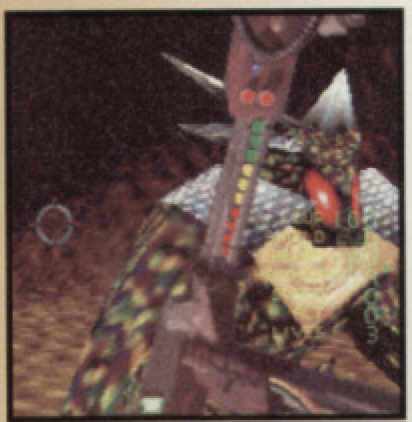
CYBER DOOM

In shorthand, Ghen War is best described as a 3-D Doom clone, with various missions in a labyrinth of Ghen territory. There are specific tasks to perform in each, with generators to destroy and walls to breach, but mostly you're hunting down Ghen and annihilating them. For this, choice weapons are on offer.





It's the transporter room from Star Trek!



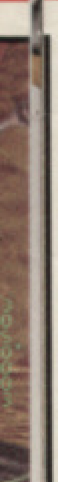


Those ghen get every-where.





With bosses like these, prepare to restart frequently.





Later on, this bizarre space deck chair appears. About two seconds before you die.



These spider creatures look most impressive in motion.

NEXT GHEN

In an effort to broaden the gameplay, later levels involve more than destruction. Your mobile suit can be fitted with a grabbing arm to manipulate objects, and some levels take place in a hi-tech complex of passages and lifts.



Not an NHS hospital, but a Ghen mining plant that must be destroyed.







In the nexus of Ghen territory, the decor is decidely gruesome. This is a door.

TRUE PINBALL

BY: OCEAN
GAME TYPE: PINBALL
PRICE: TBA
RELEASE: DECEMBER
1-4 PLAYERS
COMPLETE

Pinball is one pastime attracting the attention of several Saturn developers at the moment. Digital Pinball, published by Sega and produced by a Japanese developer called Kaze, disappointed fans who wanted something with more of the diversity and excitement of the real thing. Incidentally, Digital Pinball is not, despite reports in the gutter press, Gus' favourite game.

Salvation may come from the Super Troupers of Sweden. Digital Illusions, a serious developer who have to put up with the twin banes of Scandinavian society: the suicide rate and ABBA jibes from foreigners. Despite this, they have managed to create a nice little line in pinball games, starting on the Amiga with Pinball Fantasies, later updated for the accursed CD32 (remember that?) and now four new tables, True Pinball, for the Saturn.

All those years of studying realistic ball movement and table design can now be put to decent use. The interface for True Pinball has been made as simple as possible, and the game is not confused with sub games and interludes. Digital Illusions have tried as far as possible to simulate the look, style and play of a bar pinball machine, even down to an optional raked table display and, naturally, tilting.

The previewed version here is graphically and sonically in place, with the remaining time spent ironing out the little problems of sticking balls and scenery 'priorities' (when objects disappear behind each other). Being fans, we're dying to get a reviewable copy, and even more eager to compare it to Virgin's forthcoming Tilt! which seems to share many of its features.



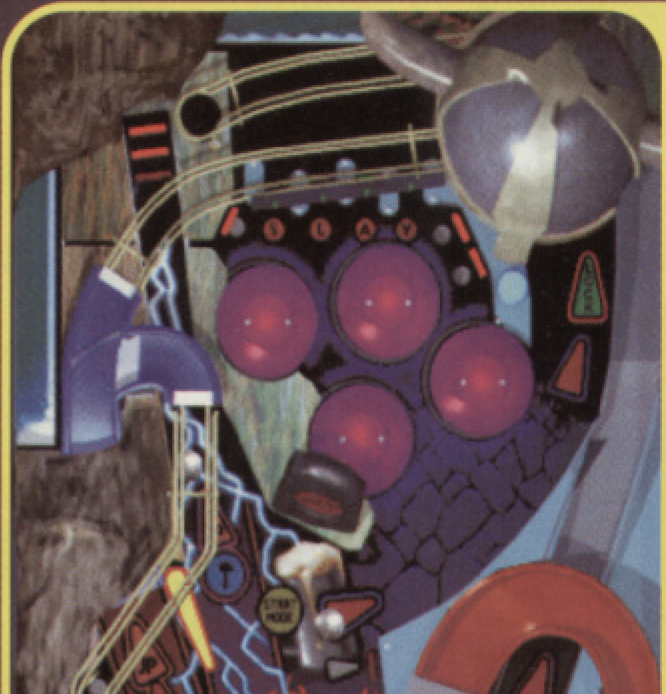






THE MATRIX

About five years ago, pinball tables underwent a major change with the addition of a dot matrix display. This allowed simple scenes and computer graphics to be linked in with bonuses and events. There are loads of excellent animations in True Pinball's own mock dot matrix display.



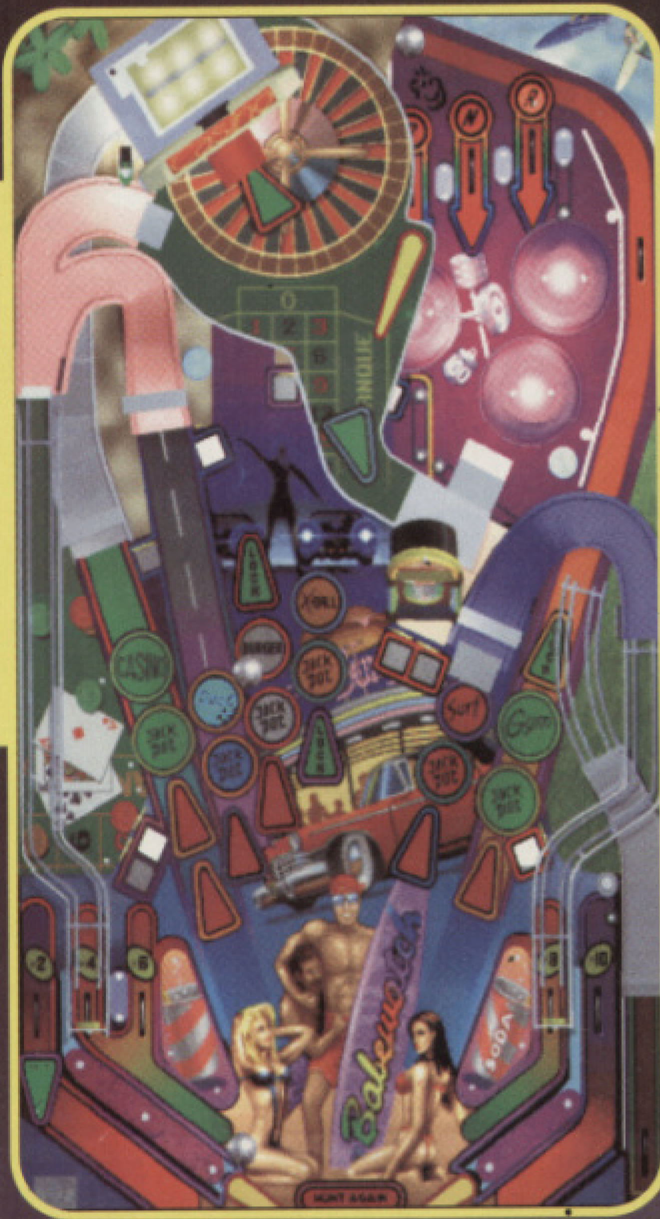
THE FOUR TOPS

A plan view, and brief sojourn round the four different pinball layouts on offer in True Pinball:



THE VIKINGS

The first ever pinball table to send you into a horned helmet. Vikings uses the legends of the Illusions guys' ancestors as the styling for the table. Go into battle, take to the longboats, and all with a weird musical score.



BABE-WATCH

Not too hard to work out that Pammy girl is the inspiration for this sea-side table. The girls are just within flipper reach and the animations depict Baywatch-style drama. There's a jukebox which lets you change the music provided you add the coins, and a casino opened from a spinning roulette wheel.



LAW AND JUSTICE

This is a Data East-style high energy table that plays very quickly. Based around law enforcement, you are out to capture four renegades to open up the jackpot. Ramps are used for 'car chases'.



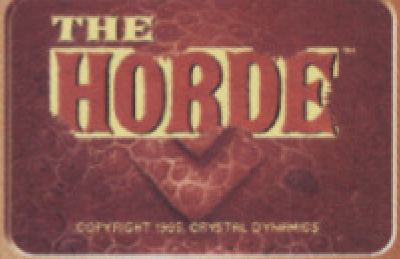




EXTREME SPORTS

All kinds of way out recreational activities are the basis for this table. A plummeting opening shot leads to various long ramps, each linked to various stunts – bungee-jumping etc. There's a gate mode enabled from a stunt plane and a large rocky outcrop to negotiate.

THE HORDE



BY: BMG

GAME TYPE: ADVENTURE

PRICE: TBA

RELEASE: DECEMBER

1 PLAYERS

COMPLETE

Being surrounded by peasants is one of the unfortunate hazards of working at Emap Towers, but it's one of the positive features of Crystal Dynamics' curious new Saturn title, The Horde.
It's a conversion of their 3DO game from last year, and offers a curious mix of adventuring, strategy and arcade action: we can't help but sound like a press release in the description.

Set in a sort of tacky medieval feu, your aim is to produce a prosperous and secure community by investing your funds in fields, homes and defences. A series of icons and menus allows you to construct an isometric village, which will grow as it attracts its own inhabitants, Populous style.

Problems come in the form of Hordelings, denizens of increasing ferocity that attack your settlement in waves and must be repelled by you. This is where you leap into action with your trusty sword, and attempt to preserve the town single-handedly. Your actions throughout the strategy sections will either help or hinder you. Left to their own devices, Hordelings will trample crops, wreck houses and devour villagers with appalling table manners.



The Hordelings pillagings leave the town battle-scarred, leading the game into a repair and maintenance phase, but over a long campaign you can gain new lands and make yourself a fortune, provided your taxes are paid on time.

The Horde is an unusual game concept and should have no peer on the Saturn when it arrives at the end of the year from BMG.









YE OLDE CURIOUSITY SHOPPE

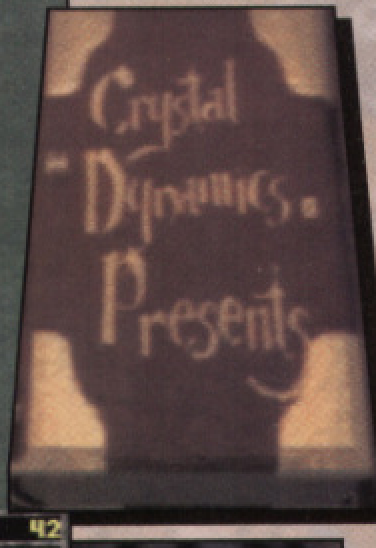
Each year end, you visit the only store in the kingdom and pick from a range of bonus, albeit extortionately priced, items. These items may give you a slight advantage as you play, and expand the game. The cheapest is a recipe to create succulent haunches of ham that will temporarily attract hordelings away from your village. More expensive items augment your defensive options – like impenetrable stone walls – and even add new fighters, or hirelings, to your complement.















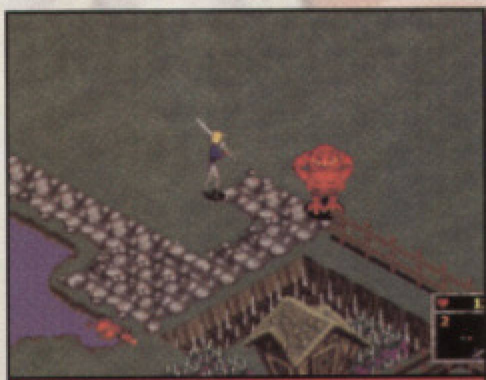


Your Mediaeval holiday camp is under threat from hammy actors.

BY YOUR LIEGE

Cut into the game action throughout are filmed scenes featuring various actors togged up as vassals, lords, leprosy victims and the like. The production has that sub-Cellblock-H quality that Crystal Dynamics' film sequences are infamous for.

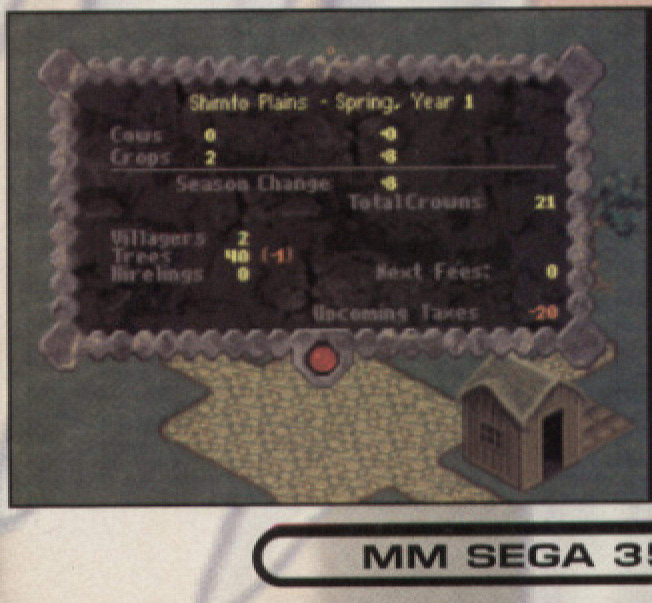




Stalk and slash killer tomatoes threatening your patio.







BLAZING DRAGONS

BY	BMG
GAME TYPE	ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
PRICE	TBA
RELEASE	DECEMBER
COMPLETE	

Comedy is a genre rarely tapped by video games. Not intentionally at least, though some have ventured into the realms of hysteria and hilarity before with games they would rather forget. BMG are the first to be so bold on the Saturn with the unusual Blazing Dragons.

The game boasts the creative talent of Terry Jones who, if you didn't know, was one of the creators of Monty Python's Flying Circus, which if you also didn't know was a ground-breaking and utterly bizarre BBC comedy show from the late Sixties/early Seventies. The ex-Pythons have done pretty well for themselves since then (apart from the one that died). John Cleese has grown a moustache and made several excellent shows, Terry Gilliam has made several extremely expensive movies that lost a lot of money and Michael Palin gets paid fortunes to travel round the world. Can't be bad.

The aforementioned ex-Python has lent some of their 'zany' humour to this adventure that uses a traditional point and click interface to drive a scenario which turns the usual fantasy clichés on their head. Instead of bad monsters and heroic humans, it's St. George who fulfils the villain's role, and the dragons of Cavelot who you aim to help.

The game uses colourfully sketched cartoon backdrops and sprites to depict a dragon Kingdom suffering the onslaught of human knights. As a fearless young dragon your aim is to find the Knights of the Square Table, but first there is a more mundane matter: the dishes need washing.

Once you've figured out the early problems the game opens out into a series of mini action games and object-related puzzles. We still have some serious game hours to put in on this one before we can bring you the review, but maybe next month we'll be in a position to be critical.







GOING BALLISTIC

The 'puntastic' potential of a cat-loaded catapult proved too much for the designers, who included this game of aim and reflexes. This practice area comes before the main event, where ten targets are required to qualify.







Educate your poncey dragon in the elementals of kitchen hygiene. And how to finish dressing himself.



This Walter Prince of Softies finds life in the dragon domain rather taxing.



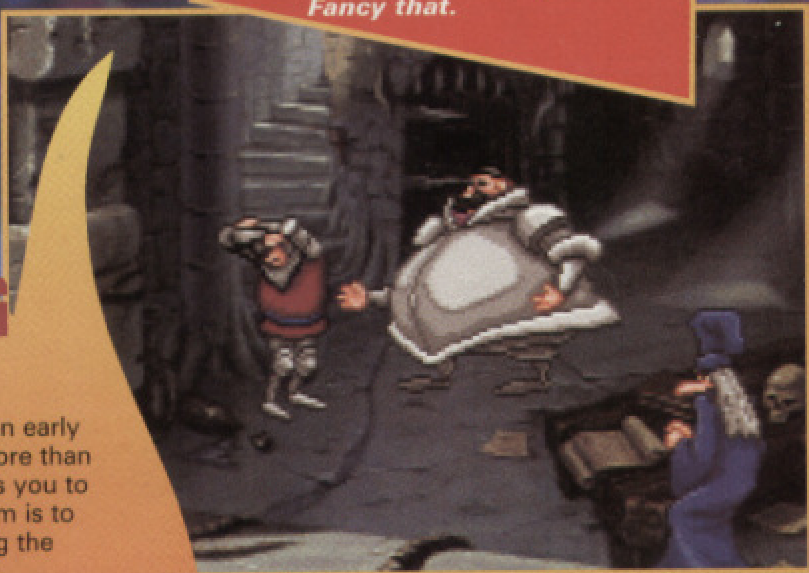


POCKET SHUFFLING

The pockets in your 'dragon suit' are deep enough to hold several objects. These may be examined, manipulated or combined with other features in the backgrounds to create effects.



Lusty serving maids, dim-witted knights, angry fat blokes – blimey, it's Monty Python's Meaning of Life. Fancy that.



DANCING QUEEN

This strange guy, Butch, features in an early interlude that appears to have little more than entertainment value. Butch challenges you to a dancing competition, where the aim is to match his various moves, including the thrusting 'Sherwood Shuffle'.







BY INTERPLAY

GAME TYPE RPG/SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE TBA

RELEASE JANUARY

1 PLAYERS

COMPLETE

The Earth of 2027 is devastated after global economic collapse. The bitter power struggle between the remaining criminal cartels and the Free World Alliance is a conflict dominated by paranoia, mistrust and chaos. It is in this atmosphere of sophisticated hi-tech warfare that Cyberia, Interplay's new RPG/action game is set.

You play Zak, an outlaw computer hacker serving solitary confinement for treason and espionage. In true Dirty Dozen style, the mysterious William Devlin arranges your release in exchange for your promise to 'collect' the revolutionary TF 22 fighter plane and fly it to Siberia. Once there, your mission is to locate the Cyberia base and capture a deadly biological weapon. You are an expendable criminal on a near suicidal lone mission. And the back-up team is a long way behind...

Like Defcon 5, Cyberia is part of a new wave of ultra-sophisticated 'adult' RPG titles making their debuts on Sega systems. Cyberia, which was warmly received in its original PC CD-ROM incarnation earlier this year, promises outstanding rendered graphics, slick arcade shoot 'em up sequences and a soundtrack by Thomas Dolby's Headspace – a company established by the synthmeister specifically to concentrate on games music.





DOUBLE VISION

While Zak's wrap round shades might resemble a laughably dated ski accessory in the '90s, they come in quite useful in the year 2027. William Devlin is able to 'project' his briefing and plans of the Cyberia project onto your 'BLADES' at the beginning of the game, giving you a visual reference for your targets. Later on, the specs come in useful when you come up against obstacles such as locked doors. The BLADES (Bi-optic Low Amplitude Displayed Energy System) have three built-in scanning functions which you can access from your joypad – infa red/thermal scan; magnetic resonance imaging and bioscan. The latter function is usually reliable for detecting the presence of potentially hostile people on the other side of locked doors.



The dreaded 'Game Over' screen is rarely more than a few seconds away – these guys have no qualms about shooting you in the back.









TRIGGER HAPPY

Cyberia is punctuated by 11 levels of arcade style shoot 'em up action as a complement to the more cerebral puzzle challenges. The first finds you in the 'cockpit' of a futuristic anti-aircraft gun. To survive, blow away as many of the marauding fighters and bombers as you can. Train your guns towards the sea as well – magnetic mines drifting towards the rig can cause serious damage on impact.







YBERIA



CANDID CAMERA



You collect your TF 22 fighter from a heavily armed rig set out in the Ocean. Tread carefully with the rig boss, the charming Santos, and you might get away from the James Bond-style base alive. Resist the sexual advances of Santos's sultry girlfriend if you want to improve your chances. Stick your tongue down her throat and you'll find yourself starring in one of the big guy's surveillance videos. And once he starts torturing you you'll wish you opted for a cold shower instead...





STEVE'S TIPS



Greetings tipsmeisters. As well as providing a whole bunch of stunning cheats, I've come up with a few New Year's resolutions to keep you going through the long winter evenings. Here goes:

1. If you have a really crap Christmas present, go up to the person who sent it and tell them it's the biggest pile of chud you've ever had. People appreciate honesty.

2. If you're getting a Saturn this Yuletide and haven't got a Scart TV to run it on, don't worry, just send it to us and it will never bother you again. Kindness is so important.

3. If your Dad/Mum/any relative works for a computer company, just remember that we love freebies. Really we do! Generosity is a virtue.

4. Don't do magazine covers on worthless sequels. Loyalty to your readers is vital.

5. Offer a world exclusive on Aaahh! Real Monsters in a bid to win back your flagging readership. Desperation is a last resort.

Send all your tips on your brand new Chrissie presents (no more old MK 3 stuff please) to: TIPS ARE THE KEY, TIPS DEPARTMENT, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

MEGADRIVE

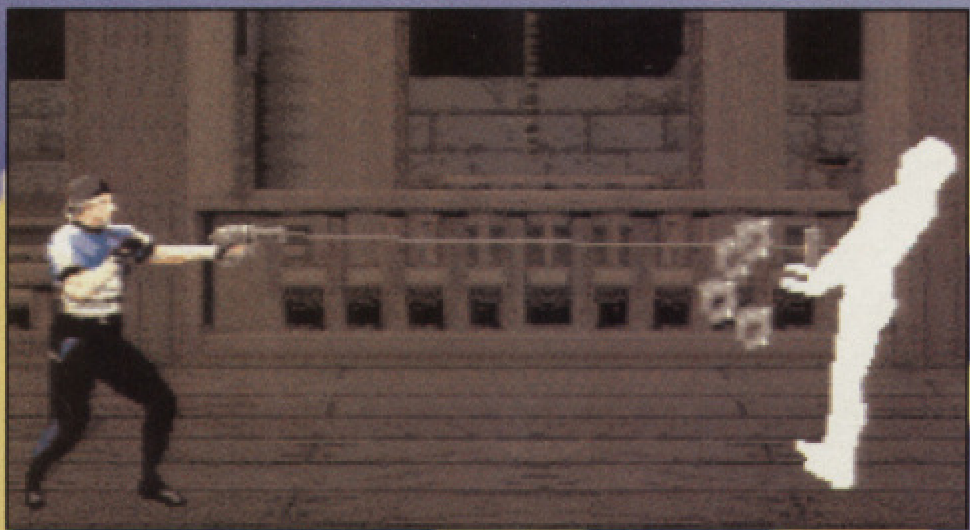
MORTAL KOMBAT 3

PLAY AS BOSS CHARACTERS

At last, we have the Kombat 3 cheats all you annoying little pests have been waiting for. To play as Smoke, Motaro or Shao Kahn, go to the Start/Options screen and press the following button combinations: C, Right, A, Left, A, Up, C, Right, A, Left, A, Up. This will bring up the Killer Kodes menu, from which you can select one of three hidden characters, a quick end, where you can see all the finishing moves, and play the hidden game of Galagan. This secret screen will enable you to change the timer speed, the Kombat Zone and see the ending screens. Hit B, A, Down, Left, A, Down, C, Right, Up, Down. You have Paul Clarrigan of Doncaster to thank for those. While we're on the subject, we had some excellent Action Replay codes sent in from Andrew Tucker from Workington, Cumbria. Try this little lot out:

FF000 F0000: CHEAT MENU
FF000 F0002: KILLER KODES
FF029 E0008: EXTRA FATALITY TIME
FF02A 00002: PLAY GALAGAN
FF000 F0001: SECRETS MENU
FF029 F0010: PLAY PONG
FF029 F0040: HEALING POWERS
FF029 E0001: INFINITE TIME



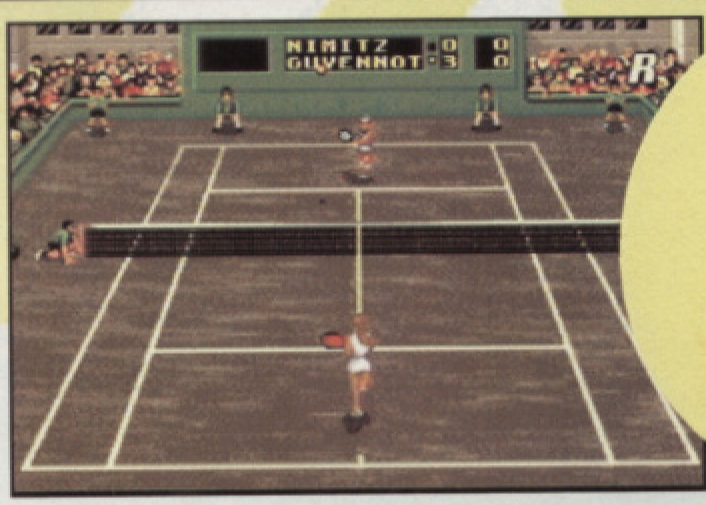


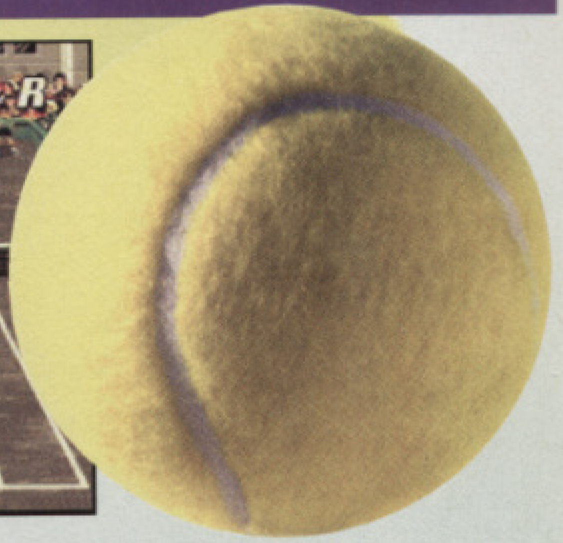


PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS '96

PASSWORDS

Here we have the passwords for every round of the World championships, as kindly sent in by Richard Harte Esq. from Hornchurch in Essex.
BGFCB: Delgado Vs. Tucker: Round 2
BGFFH: Delgado Vs. Turnetti: Round 4
BGFGG: Delgado Vs. Kurosawa: Round 5
BGFHF: Delgado Vs. Guyennd: Round 6
BGFFC: Delgado Vs. Nimitz: Round 7
BGFKB: Delgado Vs. Sampras: Final Round
Richard also points out that if you want to play as Sampras in the any of the rounds then enter the letters BFG and any two end letters from the passwords above, and you'll be able to whip them as the master himself.







HIDDEN GAMES

Following on from the guide a few issues back, a couple more secret games have been drawn to our attention. To play a game of volleyball run through these credentials before you start: You must be fighting at the Cove, with some time left on the clock. It must NOT be sudden death. When a human runs in front of you, hit or kick them through the air towards your opponent. Hit the human back and forth eight times and a net and umpire will appear between you. But be careful – if you try to bite the ball, it will explode. That excellent tip was sent in by John Walsh of Wexford in Ireland. The other hidden treat comes in the form of Skydiving cows! (we kid you not). To activate these you must be playing in the ruins, and both players must be tied in the third round. At least one player must be Chaos AND there must be a fart of fury cloud in the air as the timer reaches zero, AND the match must go into sudden death. And now the cheat you have all been waiting for...due to a small technical fault, there was a delay for this cheat, but here at MEAN MACHINES we believe better late than never, so to access the secret options screen, press the following on the Start/Options screen: L, U, R, R, U, L, R, R, L, L, U, U. This should make the options available to you. A very big Ta! to Ben Willbery of Oxford for that little gem.





SUPER SKIDMARKS

SECRET CODES

Skiddy jokes ahoy! No, I will not descend to toilet humour any more. There are a batch of top codes to spruce up this excellent racing sim that have just been brought to my attention. So pull up your Y-fronts, and get wiping as we reveal (drum roll) how to be a COW! Enter the first batch of passwords on the enter your name screen:
SAVAGE: Start with a turbo engine.
MOOMOO: Always race as cow.
KRAZED: Always race in an F1 car.
SHADOW: Race as just a shadow.
Not content with those, then try this lot to send you into skiddy pants heaven. These have to be entered on the password section on the options screen:
SPRINTER: Go straight to the Pro League.
CHOCMILK: Bovine Warrior (Cows).
GUARDIAN: Acid Grand Prix.
SPACEMAN: Nearly Zero gravity.



MEGADRIVE

THEME PARK

ALWAYS FIX RIDES AND CHANGE PASSWORDS

Tips for this game keep flooding in, and it's all getting a little bit silly. If, for instance, you always want a ride to be fixed without you having to click on it, hire a mechanic and then put the ride you want automatically repaired on top of him. This will then make him become incredibly loyal and as soon as the ride starts to smoke he will be over there in a flash, repairing until his little pixel heart is content. That was sent in by Dominic Lafferty, of Co. Donegal, Ireland. The second noteworthy tip came all the way from the land of Canals and Tulips – Bognor. No, not really, Holland, courtesy of Freddy Van Der Berg. He says that he sold Antarctica and India for over 1 billion dollars, but the password system only restores the price to $999, 999, 000. The password for 999 etc. is GAABAAA8STG, but if you rearrange the last three letters to read GTS, the price when you start will now read $1, 015, 344, 000. Thank you Freddy.



MEGA CD

SNATCHER

UNCENSORED MODE

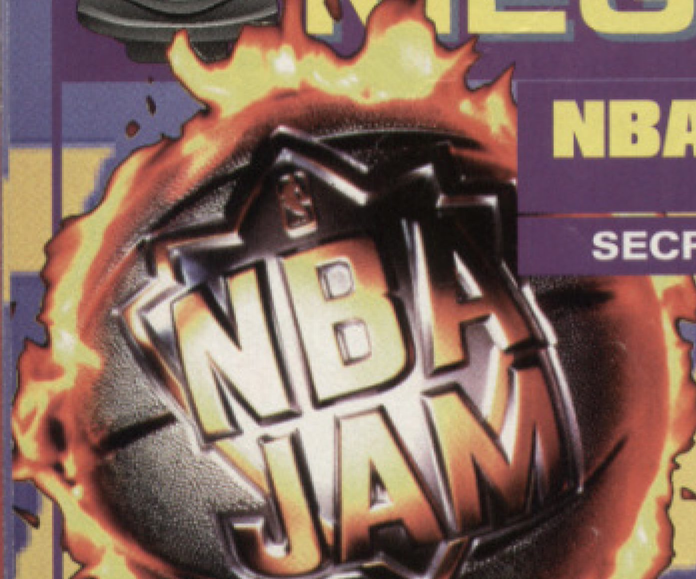
"Snatcher is one of me all time fave games of all time mate."
"Er wise words mate, and you do know how to make this Mega CDtastic game uncensored?"
"Er, no I don't mate"
"Well great mate, all you have to do is find the Jordan Computer and enter your name as Konami. You'll hear a fabmongus sound that'll tell you when it's done and get ready for a goremungous, hack and slashtastic version of the game."
"Fab.".







MEGADRIVE 32X



NBA JAM TOURNAMENT EDITION

SECRET CHARACTERS

According to Carl Barton of Widnes (good rugby team) you can select all the secret characters from the Megadrive version by simply re-arranging the passwords. For example, if you want to be Prince Charles, on the Megadrive you had to enter his name as Roy + C only, A, B. For the 32 X you enter Roy as before, but press B, A, C only. He adds that this works for all bar three of the characters. Nice one son.



SATURN

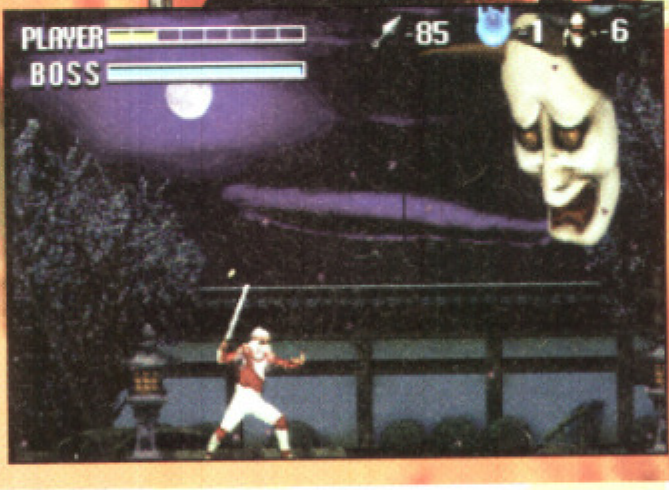


SHINOBI X

999 SHURIKENS AND VIEW FMV SCREENS

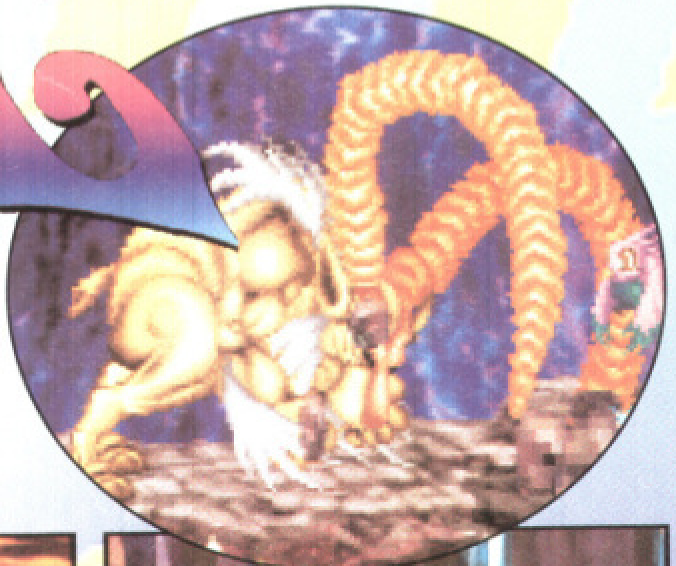
Wax on, Wax off. Very good Daniel Son. Wise man once say, if you want to get 999 shurikens on this average Saturn platformer, execute the following cheat. Go to the options screen and highlight 'Shurikens' Now hold L and R and then press C, A and B and there you go. Also, if for some reason you want to watch the FMV screens that make Baywatch acting look good then try this cheat. At the opening intro, press C, X, B, Y, A, Z and Start. For those we have Paul Shotton from Stoke-on-Trent to thank.





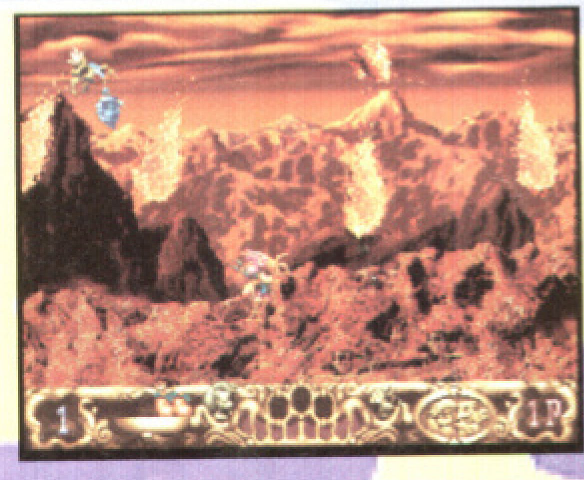
ASTAL

SECRET MODE AND STAGE SELECT

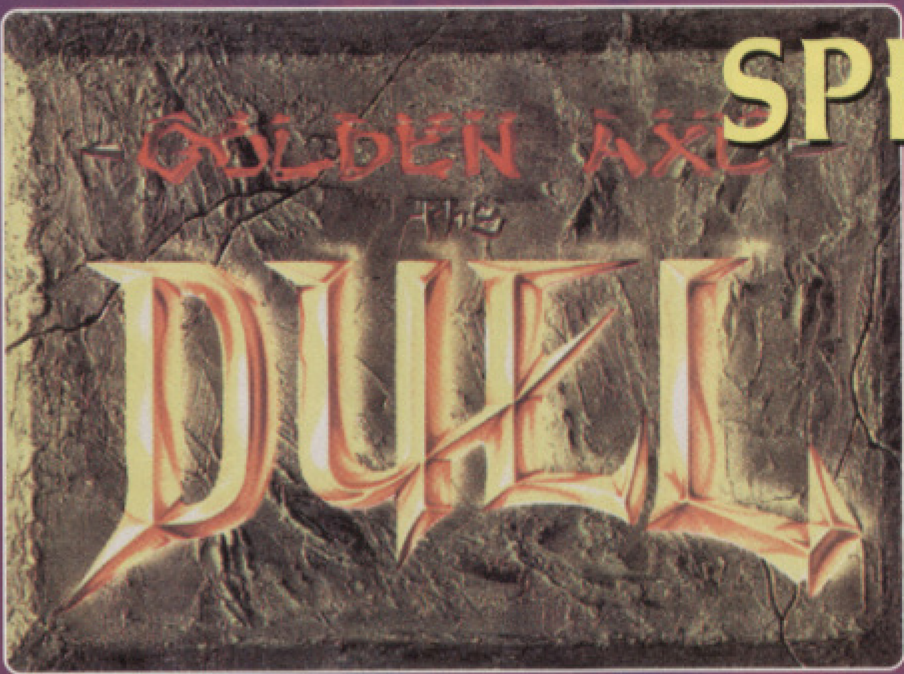


This didn't exactly win rave reviews from MEAN MACHINES when it was reviewed a few months back, but that hasn't stopped some of you from buying it. So for the sad or desperate among you, here are a few cheats for your troubles. Plug in the second controller and then go to the options screen and press Left, Right, Left, Right, Up, Down, then L, R and Start buttons. You will see a Secret Mode banner appear underneath the options logo if done correctly. You can now also select up to 99 lives as well. Now go to the Start/Options menu and press the following on pad 1: Up, Down, Left, Right, then buttons L, R, A, Y, C, Z, B, X. Stage Select should appear underneath Options.









SPECIAL MOVES

Upon playing Sega's new beat 'em up, we found it a little tricky to suss out the game's finer points. To spare you all from similar distress, we've lovingly compiled a guide to pulling off the special moves.

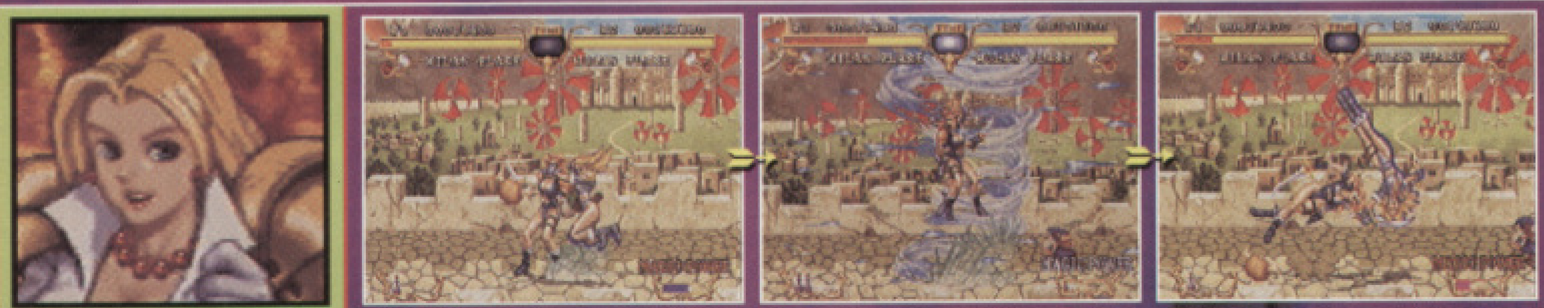
Before any of these moves can be activated, you must first collect five potions. This can either be done at the options screen by setting the potions number to five, or by waiting until you've amassed enough from hitting the little dwarves that walk across the screen. Once five have been collected, 'Power Up' will appear over the potions and you then need to press X, Y, and Z. This then gives you about 20 seconds of souped up power to unleash your new fury. The moves start with an improved version of a normal move, but if this move doesn't hit then the rest of the move won't work. Always make sure you're close enough to your opponent if you want to inflict maximum damage...

BLADE



Right, down, rotate to up-right and hit hard punch.

FLARE



Charge Down for 2 seconds, then Rotate to up-right and press Hard Kick. When on way down, hit Down and Hard Punch to activate.

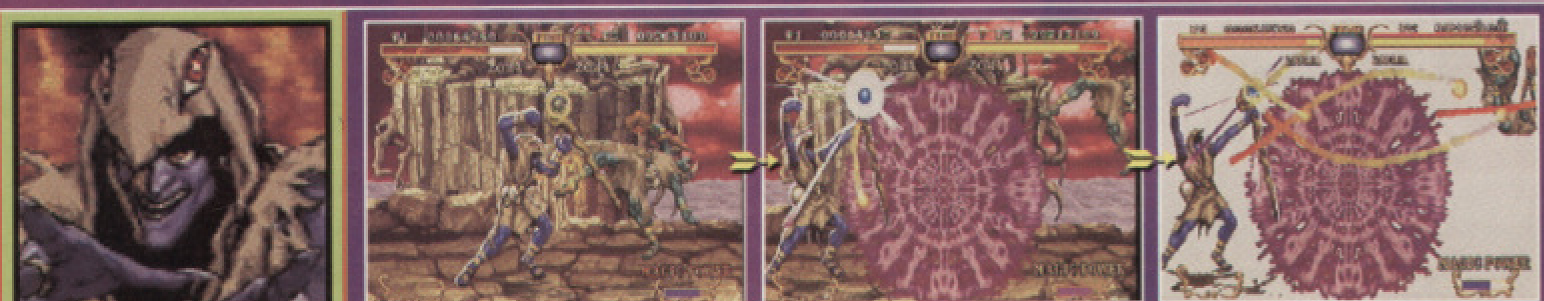


GILIUS



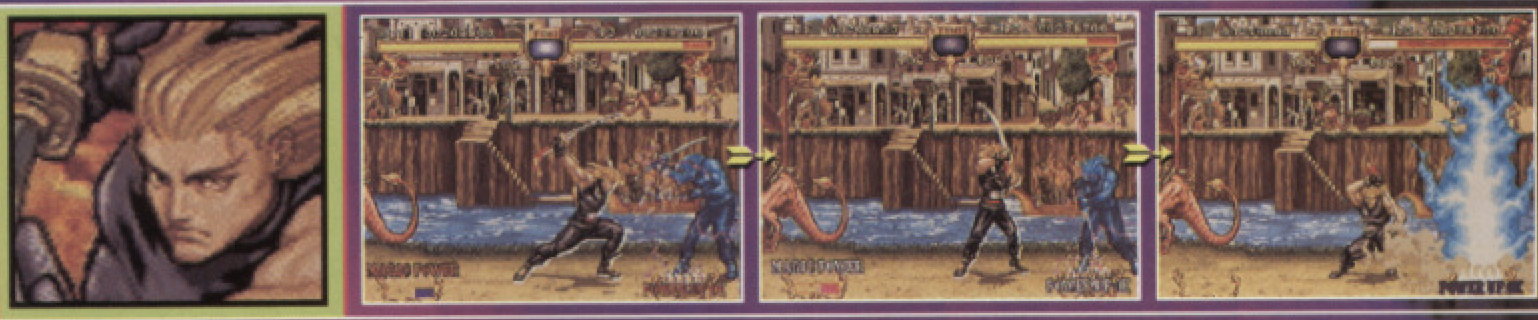
Rotate from Forward to Down-left, then hit Up-right and Hard Punch.

ZOHA



Rotate from Forward to Down twice, then hit Hard Punch.

DOC



Rotate through Forwards to Back, then hit Forwards and Hard Punch.

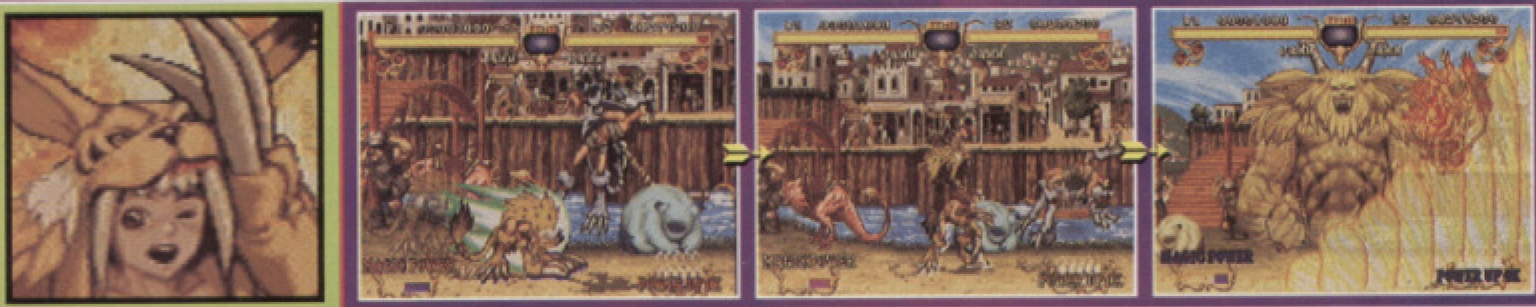
KEEL



Right, down, rotate to Up-right and hit hard punch.



JAWW



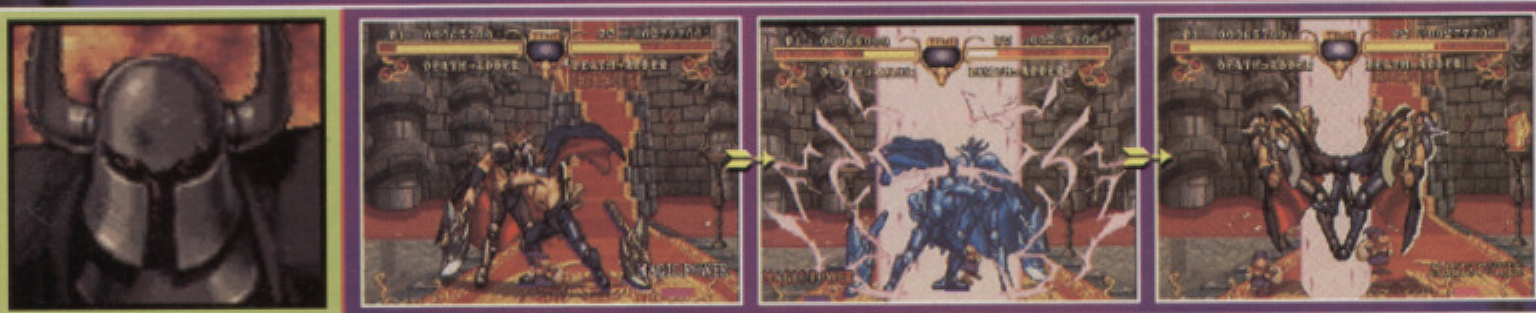
Hold Down-left for two seconds, then press Right, Down then Down-right and Hard Punch.

PANCHOS



Rotate from Back through to Up-right, then press Hard Kick.

DEATH ADDER



Rotate from Forward, through to Back, then press all three punches together.

GREEN



We couldn't actually get this to work, but the computer kept doing it on us anyway. If one of you figures it out, let us know.

3 TIER HELP

The help in this guide comes in three distinct types. Advice headed in green is the most general, non-specific and should direct you to solutions without spoiling gameplay. Move onto amber-headed paragraphs when you want more concrete gaming tips, which will still give you the satisfaction of working out the mechanism. Tips headed in red are full and blatant guides to solving problem. Follow them sapringly to get through a thorny patch — they will, literally, give the game away.

Myst is one of those total immersion games that takes you away from all other nocturnal habits, plunging you into the altogether more wholesome world of impeccably rendered graphics and troublesome puzzles. It's also a potential let's-call-up-MEAN MACHINES-with-our-problem game. In an effort to prevent this and return your gaming hours to sensible levels here is our solution to Myst, part two.



PART 2: SOLVING THE SELENITIC AGE

Sound is the key to this age. The five stations monitor sounds at a particular frequency. These in turn form a code.

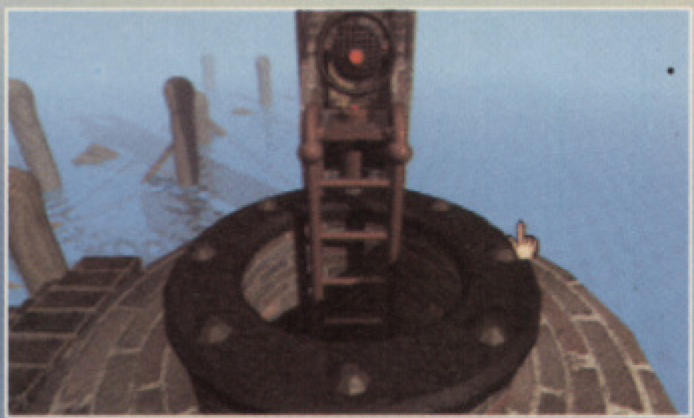
The code is gained from finding the sound frequencies from the radio reciever on the peninsula, then inputting them into the door decoder. Underground, the lessons of the Mechanical Age come into play.

There are five microphone points that must be switched on first. These amplify water; fire; wind through crystals; the clock mechanism and the air rising from the tunnel. There is a red page in the garden area and a blue page near the crystals. Now climb down the shaft and turn on the light, rise out of the other and activate the receiver mechanism. Use the left/right switches to locate the exact positioning on the sounds — there should be no interference. Note these numbers and take them to the door near the rocket ship. Input the matching effect on the slider according to numeric value rising from left to right. You now have access to the underground network.





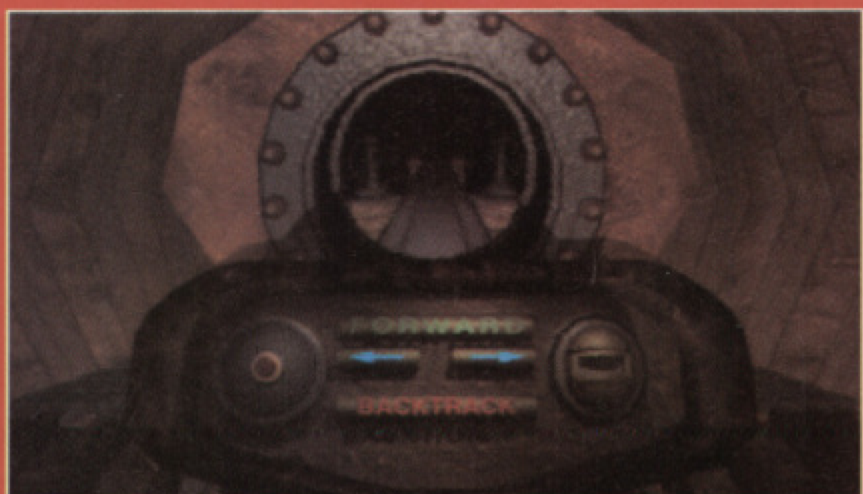




SELENETIC UNDERGROUND SYSTEM

The underground travel system uses the same sound alert system as the holographic simulator in the Mechanical Age (see box). Basically the sound at each junctions tells you where to go next. Rotate the craft to that compass point and go forward. The red button repeats the sound. Combination sounds denote half-points, eg Northwest. Follow these audible directions until you reach the Myst linking book.

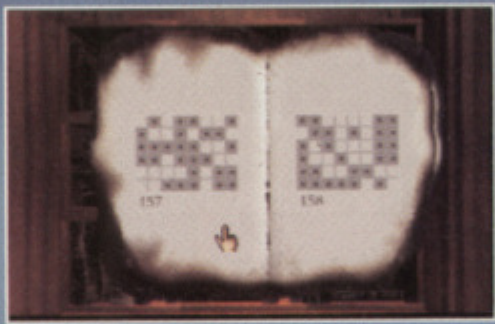




BACK ON MYST: THE DENOUEMENT

Each time you use the Myst linking book, you return to the library. The page placed in the book brings the trapped character closer to freedom. Listen to their explanations and match that with the evidence you have found.

The fourth page of either book allows the prisoner to reveal the location of the final pages. All are held in a vault hidden behind the chimney. Go to the bookshelf and select the rightmost book on the second shelf. There are dozens of pages of patterns. Turn to page 158 and sketch the layout. Leave the book and enter the fireplace on the other wall of the library. Press the button and bring up a metallic panel. Imprint the code and press the button again. The chamber spins to reveal a shelf, with the final pages...and a green book. You will have been warned by both brothers to ignore this new book. Do you take their advice?



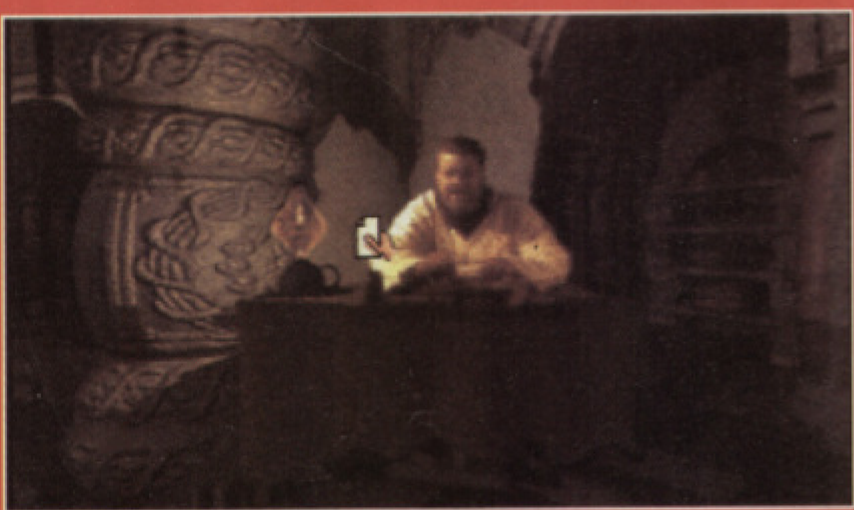






WARNING: THE FINAL REVELATION OF MYST

Touch the green book. It opens to reveal a new figure at a table. He calmly introduces himself as the two trapped sons' father: Adras — the writer of the books! He also informs you that they have lied to you. Not one, but both are culpable of the sins that led to the destruction of the library and their own capture. Unfortunately, they sabotaged their own father's Myst Linking Book, so Adras has been trapped in Dunny until now. He tells you of the last page of his book, hidden by the sons in the 'Vault of Myst'. Leave the library and, if you have not already done so, turn all the marker switches on across the island. Go to the quayside and turn that one off. A panel clicks open to reveal the missing page. Take it back to Adras' (keep that pattern handy) and travel to Dunny. He takes the page and then leaves you for a few nerve-wracking moments before returning. Using the last linking book, you find yourself back in the library, with both red and blue books gone and mysterious blast marks in their place. A single note lies in their place: congratulations, and a last secret revealed.





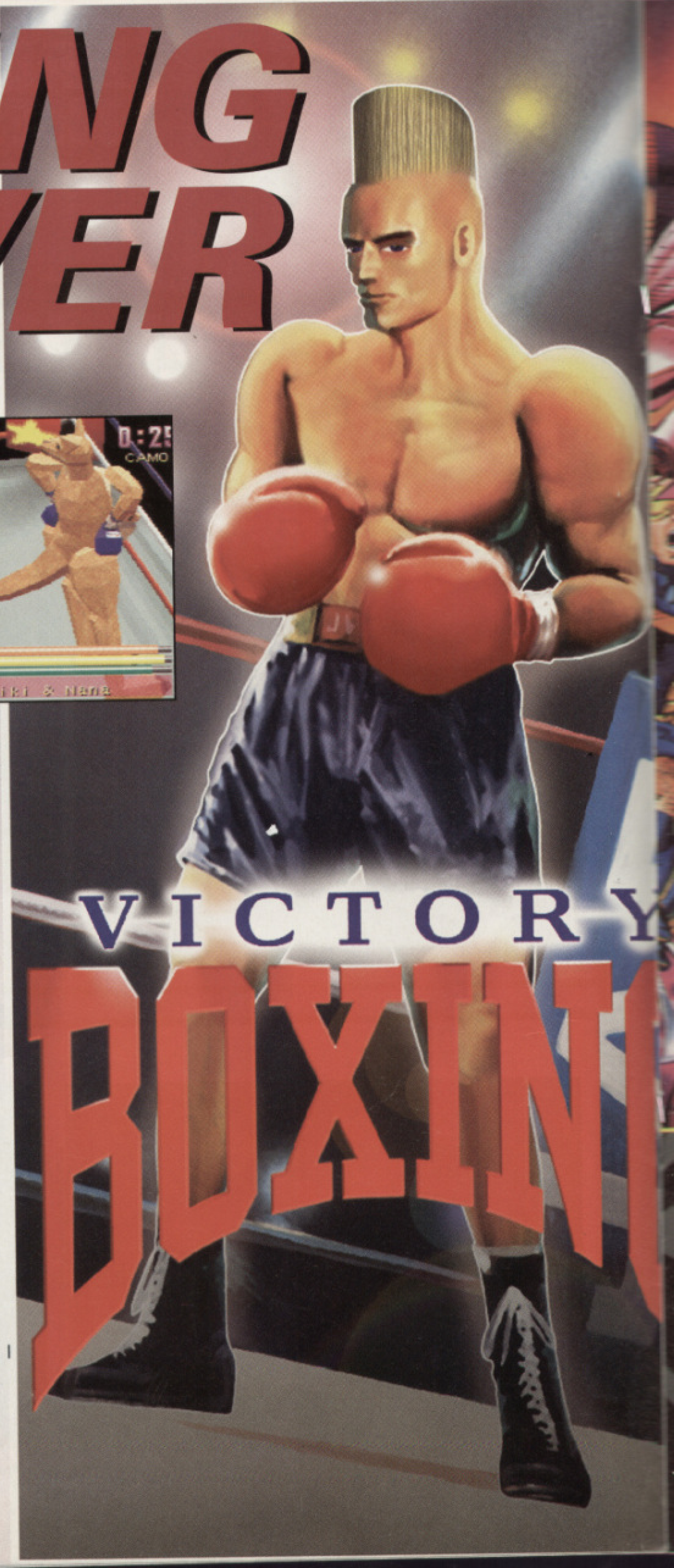
WATCH THE MAKING OF MYST: HOLD A,B,TOP LEFT, TOP RIGHT AND START ON THE TITLE SCREEN

BOXING CLEVER

Now we've all had a few weeks to fiddle about with Victory Boxing, a couple of unusual contenders have come to light. OK, a kangaroo is perhaps slightly more than unusual, and a silver chick with a philips screw-driver for a head is more than out of the ordinary, but who cares? Anyway, those kind folks at JVC have finally come clean about the game's five secret characters, and allowed us to sneak a look at Victory Boxing's boot squad. To access the boxers you can see on these pages, simply play through the league in main event mode until you've floored your thirty opponents. Once you're Number 1 you'll face 'The Champ', a muscle-bound nutter who has successfully defended his position 20 times. Easy, eh? Once you've forced The Champ to change his name, five secret boxers will be loaded into your Saturn's memory. So lace up your gloves and prepare to take on this lot...







JVC GIVEAWAY!

If you're not punch drunk after that lot, you might be up for entering our JVC competition. To be in with a chance of winning one of the following goodies, tell us the answer to this question:

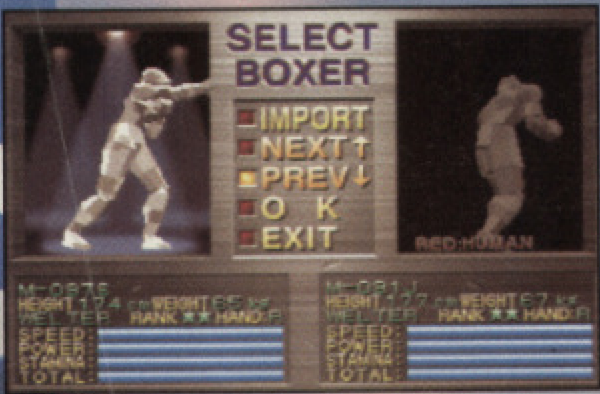
WHO WAS THE LAST BRITISH BOXER TO WIN A HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE?

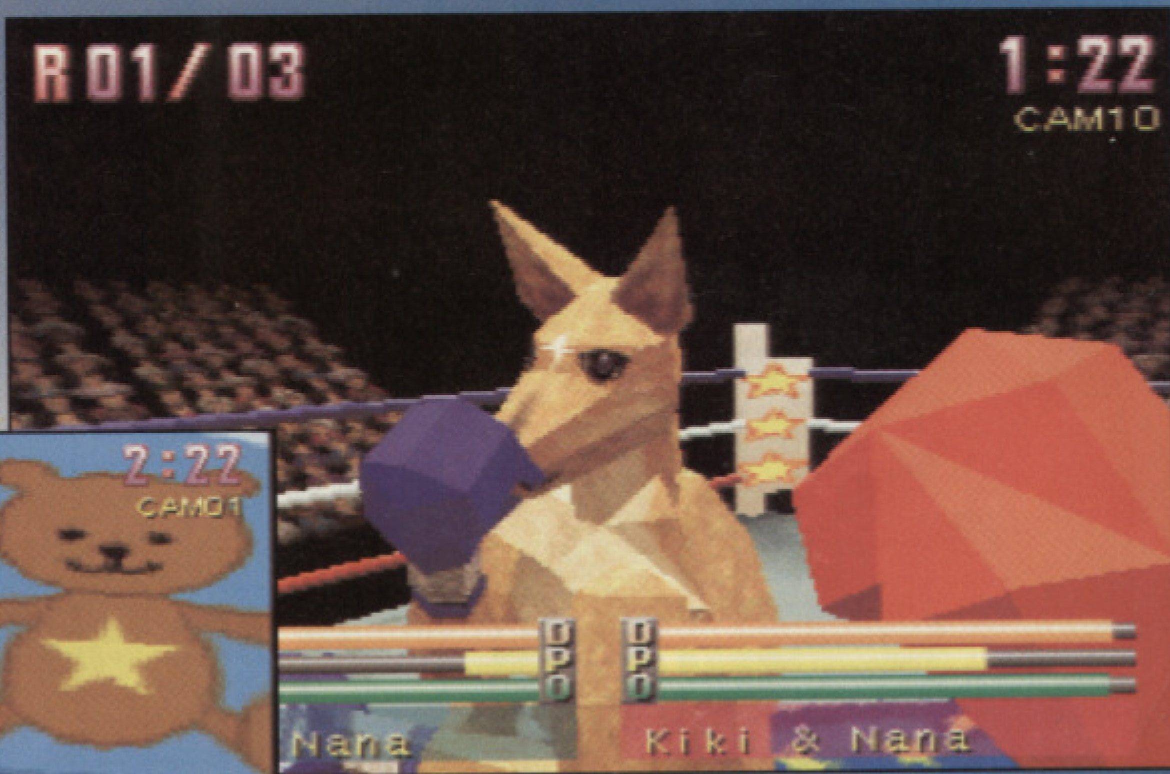
The first correct answer drawn out of the hat on 24th January 1996 will receive the brand spanking new JVC RC–XCI portable CD stereo.



Three runners-up will each receive 20 top quality JVC blank audio cassettes.

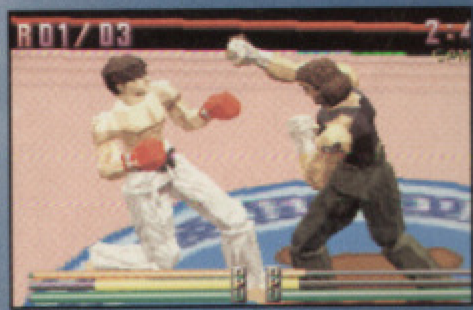
Send your entries on a postcard or the back of a sealed-down envelope to PUNCH DRUNK at the editorial address. The usual competition rules apply, and multiple entries will be fed to Steve's old pants. Don't take the risk – it's just not worth it.











Snake (a former coach who likes a drink or two), a couple of Dural lookalikes and a pair of kangaroos named Kiki and Nana are amongst your new opponents. Rather you than me.



BY CAPCOM

RELEASE JANUARY

PRICE £49.99

GAME TYPE BEAT 'EM UP

1-2 PLAYERS

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
TOUGH

CONTINUES
UNLIMITED

SKILL LEVELS
8

RESPONSIVENESS
BRILLIANT

ORIGIN

Another Capcom coin-op arrives on the Saturn in all its technicolour glory.

GAME AIM

Come on, you've heard it all before. Punch, kick and fireball your way to the top etc.

BEAT THIS

ROUND 7 ON NORMAL

The big guns are blazing in the beat 'em up world and the Saturn is witnessing the fiercest action. The X-Men comics are still big after all these years, and the recent spin-off cartoon series was similarly successful. The first game featuring the mutants gained mixed reviews when released on the Megadrive, and the follow up again didn't exactly do the license justice. But now, it seems fans have been rewarded with a game worthy of the name.

With Capcom, the fighting game masters, at the helm, this conversion couldn't have been in better fists. The programmers have dispensed with the relatively conservative dress of Virtua Fighter, and gone for the all out extravagance of a RuPaul lookalike convention. The fighters are, on occasions, nearly a full screen's height in size, and with multiple fireballs and projectiles flying about on screen this really taxes the Saturn's processing powers. Although some of the more popular characters are excluded, most of 10 selectable ones and hidden warriors are reputable enough, so die-hard enthusiasts should be more than satisfied.



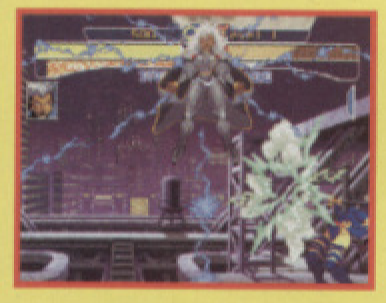
WHO'S X-ACTLY WHO?

When we last looked at the game, three of the characters were yet to be added. Now we are able to bring you the full uncanny company in a little more detail. For those of you who missed our fabulous coverage a couple of issues back, here's a brief run down on the other characters:

STORM



The fighter previously known as Ororo Munroe had ancestors deeply involved in black magic, which would explain her control over the elements. She was shot down and stripped of her powers in the early days of the X-Men, but returned to lead the mutants as their cunning master. Her attacks mainly consist of small hurricanes and lightening bolts, but she also has the ability to fly, making evading most of the weaker attacks in the game a lot easier.





OMEGA RED

A tentacled Dr. Octopus look alike, but the similarities end there. A powerful mutant, with a long reach and power moves that make him a good choice.



CYCLOPS

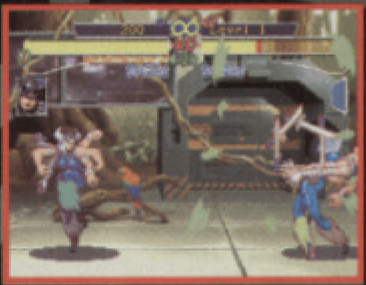
This guy has been around since day 1 of the comic series, so a little respect is due if you please. His laser attacks are really nasty, so be warned.





SPIRAL

Perhaps the most obscure character in the game, Spiral is a space age fighter who is one of the 'good' mutants' principal enemies. Having fought against them in the comics on quite a few occasions she was rewarded with a place in this game. She has 6 arms at her disposal, and the standard hard punch attack can produce an easy six hits. Her other moves are, on the whole, fairly weak, but she does possess the best special in the game.







WOLVERINE

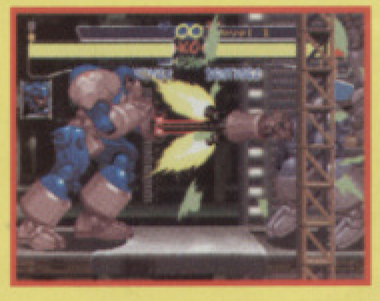
Probably the best known and most popular character, his moves and top combos are easily achieved. Beginners would be wise to play as him.



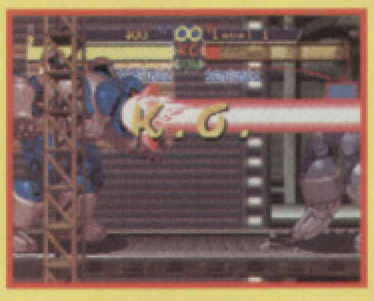
SENTINIEL

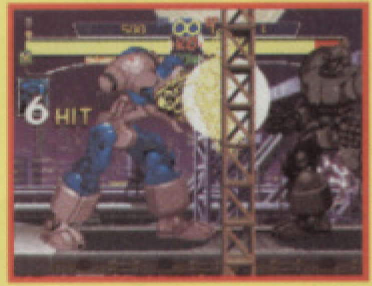
These huge robots were created with one aim in mind – to apprehend all of the mutants by any means necessary. In one animated episode, a Sentiniel is captured and his mind read. Professor X orders the destruction of the Mutant Registration act, and it all gets very serious. He is really slow, but his attacks with detachable arm bits are really powerful, and when strung together in combos can be most rewarding.





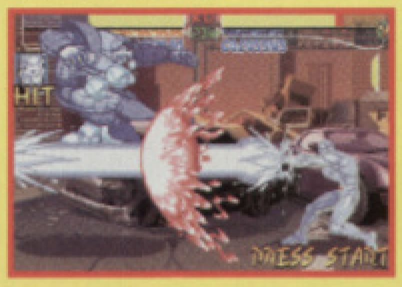






ICEMAN

He is one of the best all round characters, with a wide variety of ice moves and a special that can inflict 52 hits! A good fighter to try to master.



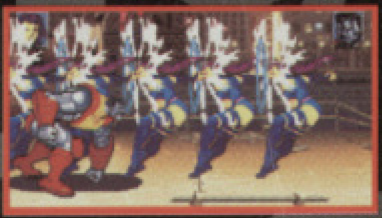
COLOSSUS

He's a big and slow, but his ability to change his skin to an organic metal increased his strength and he became an X-Man, having previously worked on a farm! Strange bloke.



PSYLOCKE

The twin sister of Captain Britain, her moves stem from her acquired bionic eyes. She died in one of the comics, but was bought back to life later on in the series.



SILVER SAMURAI

One of the less well known mutants, his energy is channelled into his sword, with all the notable moves coming from this. One of the better fighters to play as.



AFTER DARK

For those who like to inflict a little psychological damage on their bewildered opponents, this game has a sly little method of doing just that. When an opponent's defeated and the scores are being tallied, walk up to the mutant whilst holding the R-button. Now you are free to execute a few kicks and punches while the man is down, just to add a little insult to injury. Be warned, however, that this has been known to backfire, causing your slightly peeved opponent to follow up with a quick caning in the next round to make you look the fool. Serves you right really.











You've got this bloke slightly riled. I can sense it.







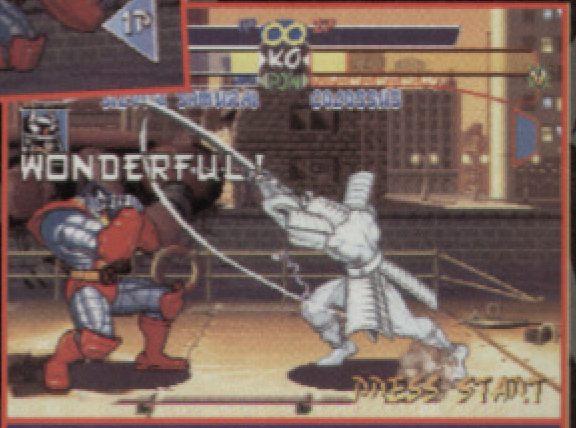
GOING DOWN!

The backgrounds in the game conceal slightly more than your average stages. In MK 3 (just an example, not a comparison) you could be uppercutted into the level above, but with the added benefits of the Saturn you now fall down a terrace or two, with some of these dropping down as far as four stages. The floor will collapse after a few nasty combos or a bad fall, but the even better thing is that the fighters will still battle with each other whilst descending, meaning the combo count can hit the roof if you time your attacks well.







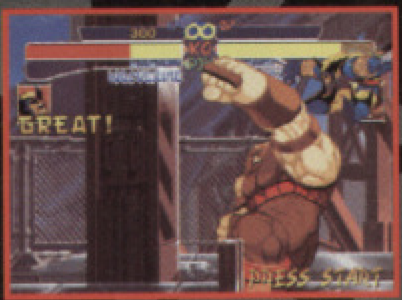


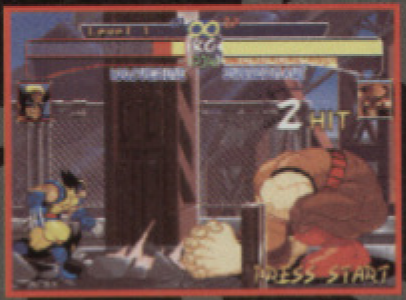
How do you think Silver Samurai made it into this Japanese game? I guess we'll never know.



THE HIDDEN

The game has two boss characters who must be defeated to complete the game – Magneto and Juggernaut. As far as we know, these are both available to play via cheats but we don't yet know how. Magneto is one of the many X-Men to have switched allegiance between good and bad and back again. He was once known as Magnus, which isn't the toughest of names, and adopted Magneto when he developed the use of magnetic powers and energy. But to get to him you must first face the mighty Juggernaut. And when we say mighty, we mean it. This bloke makes Sentinel look like Mr. Sheen. He is really slow, which is the key to his undoing, but get caught up in his punches and you'll soon regret it. A more surprising secret character is Akuma from Street Fighter, and this guy is awesome. All his moves are the same, and he has a wild special attack, but we'll let you find out that for yourselves.













COMMENT



MARCUS

As you may know, I'm not a big beat 'em fan, and I find the 2-D variety especially yawnsome. This, however, has made me eat my hat. It's difficult not to like a licensed game that so faithfully conveys so much of the colour, action and character of its source material. The other winning formula here is a cheeky sense of humour sadly lacking from so many other games of this type – the special moves are so utterly outrageous, and so mercifully simple to achieve, that more often than not the screen turns into multi-coloured circus of flailing limbs, giant snowballs and electrical storms. At last, a decent Marvel title. And at last, a refreshingly original 2-D beat 'em up that deserves some of the limelight its sophisticated bigger brothers are currently hogging.

COMMENT



STEVE

Well slap my thigh with a wet haddock, if this game isn't bloody brilliant! Let's get it out of the way early – this is not Virtua, and it never will be. But it is the best alternative beat 'em up available at the moment. The graphics ooze quality and have a certain cartoon feel to them enabling all of the characteristics to be added that you come to expect from Marvel material. The fighters are huge, extremely well animated mutants who roll off the moves at a frightening speed, and the amount of combos that are available really give a greater incentive to come back for more. But for me, the fact that this one of the most playable games in ages makes it an instant hit. It's rock hard even on the easiest of settings and, as a result, to see all of the endings is going to take some serious play hours. The only down side is that we are probably going to have to endure numerous sequels and upgrades.

GRAPHICS 94

▲Superb detail and backdrops, with lots of action going on at once, and no hint of slow down.

ANIMATION 95

▲Even better. The characters have lots of frames all pulled off at multiple speeds and no blocky sections.

MUSIC 90

▲Lots of background music to delight your ears and there are no annoyingly repetitive sections.

EFFECTS 91

▲Lots of cries and shrieks when the moves are executed, and all are pretty clear.

PLAYABILITY 94

▲If you had a life, you won't have after playing this. Resistance is useless.

LASTABILITY 93

▲With eight skill levels to master and secret characters to find, this department scores high as well.

OVERALL

Don't be put off by the 2-D environment – this is a sophisticated and brutal beat 'em up. Purchase now!

94



BY: SEGA

RELEASE: OUT NOW (IMPORT)

PRICE: £64.99 (IMPORT)

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN

1-8 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
NONE

SKILL LEVELS
5

RESPONSIVENESS
OKAY

ORIGIN

Originally a coin-op, then converted to the Playstation, this is a new arrival on the Saturn.

GAME AIM

It's a beat 'em up. Fight your rival characters and kill the evil demons from another world.

BEAT THIS

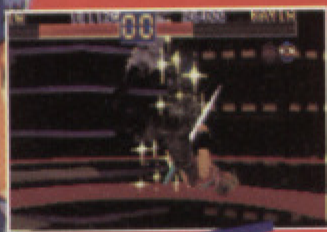
Win 1P game on normal.

If any Playstation owners are reading this, then take a long hard look at the forthcoming games for the Saturn. What do you see? Not only Sega's 'Big Three', but also Wipeout, Destruction Derby and now Tohshinden. Now how do you feel? GUTTED! First out of the hat is Tohshinden. The action is viewed from a variety of different angles with the camera rotating to get to those parts that other fighting games cannot reach, a la Virtua Fighter. And, as usual with beat 'em ups, the plot is the obligatory paper-thin affair with some evil wrongdoer rising from the dead to bring alive the demons from some dimension or other. The game begins with an excellent rendered intro, and then you're straight into the action...



KAYIN AMOH

This character is like a replica of Eiji, just as Ryu and Ken were similar in Streetfighter. The only difference being Kayin has probably the most powerful move in the game. It consists of a multiple hit punch combo which is impossible to block if you get caught on the wrong side of it. The total damage from this barrage of punches is around 80%!



EIJI SHINJO

The resident beat 'em up karate expert is one of the stronger players in the game. His starts with a clutch of stars appearing around him to show his gathering power, and follows up with a dazzling array of hits and a spinning uppercut to finish, inflicting around 35% damage.









DUKE B. RAMBERT

This guy is like one of the knights from the round table, and even though his attire consists of a suit of armour, he still manages to perform somersaults and dives. Amazing. His special starts off with a spinning low sword attack, and then a huge chop down onto your head, causing about 40% damage.



MONDO

Despite sounding like something from the Wayne's World films this guy is quite a good character, even if his comeback is a bit poor. It starts with a jumping uppercut using his spear (excuse me!) followed buy a clutch of fireballs performed in mid-air.



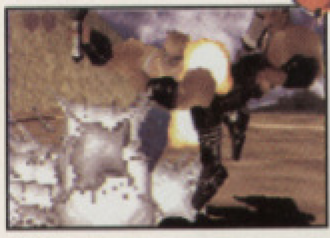


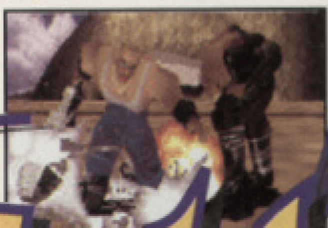
SHINDEN

RUN-GO IRON

The new Run-Go Iron from Tefal is armed with a big rock club, he is a Fred Flintstone for the nineties. His comeback starts with a super version of his charge attack, followed by an uppercut with the **club. Ouch!**







BABY COMEBACK!

A slightly different variation on the finishing move/fatality is the ability to 'comeback,' causing mammoth amounts of damage to your unsuspecting opponents. When your life bar has diminished to small amounts, the remaining energy starts to flash. This is the time to start executing the comeback moves and exploit some of the characters who are able to perform combos with up to 80% damage! Most of the fighters have at least two moves to their names, so take a look as MEAN MACHINES runs over the best attacks for each character...



FO FAI

The wise old man, and a distinct look-alike of Mr. Miagi from The Karate Kid, his forte is wisdom and guile rather than power. His first comeback is a mega version of his bubble attack, with four or five 'balls' being thrown at your opponent before a final air ball finishes them off with about 30% damage. The second is small but funny, as he bends over to fart position, before releasing a hail of fireballs.





ELLIS

One of the female characters, and although she is probably the weaker of the two, she does have quite a powerful comeback. It starts with her flying round the screen, after which she lands, gaining a couple of hits and then a series of quick attacks with her mini swords.

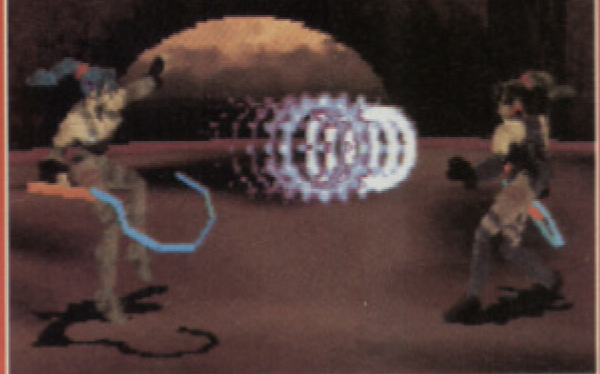












SOFIA

The escaped prisoner is a mean old cow when she wants to be, and certainly looks the part of a convict. Her main weapon is the whip, which she uses to devastating effect in the comebacks. Her first move is a hyper whip attack, which inflicts hit after hit on the dazzled opponent, causing about 30% damage. Her second is a spinning attack which culminates in one strong hit.





SSSHHH! IT'S A SECRET

The Playstation version of Tohshinden had three secret characters that could be selected via cheats. Two of those were boss fighters and the other was a souped up version of one of the other playable characters. The same can be said for this Saturn version, with the same three people hidden in the depths of the game. One of these is Gaia, who is the boss in the 1P game and is immensely powerful, and hails from some kind of warped, freaky sub stage. He is really tough to beat and has some awesome moves.













The Sticklebrick Olympics are won by the Legoland team.

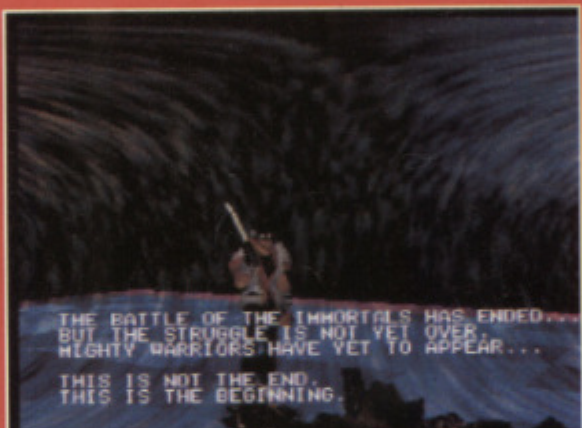


The indignity of it – whipped into submission by a chick who dresses like an Australian tart's nightmare.









A rare treat in games of this type is the ponderous and drawn out 'story mode' intro, and Toshinden's is a smirk-inducing cracker.

PLAY ME, PLAY ME

The story mode is an unusual element in non tie-in beat 'em ups, but as well as this Toshinden features a couple of other options. There is a one player game that isn't telling a tale, and features you playing each of the characters one after each other. At the end of that you get to fight Gaia, who is mentioned elsewhere in this review. Also available are the two player versus modes and a 1 player versus game where you fight the computer instead of a friend, but get to choose your opponent.

RENDERED USELESS

The short but sweet intro shows a few of the characters swanning about in their abodes, meditating in the case of Mondo, and generally having a jolly old time. The action is all rendered and provides an insight into the fighters' origins. Sofia is shown breaking out of a prison and leaping from roof tops to evade her guards, and Fo Fai is shown practising his moves a rock high above the clouds in another curious throwback to The Karate Kid. Paint the Fence Daniel-son.











Anyone who wears one of those horrible little vests to show off his medallion deserves a good kicking.



COMMENT



STEVE

Although this is nowhere near a polished and addictive as Sega's Virtua Fighters, it still has enough good elements to make it enjoyable. The graphics are well realised, and even though sometimes the characters are a little hard to distinguish, their general movements are smooth. The sounds are excellent, and the cries and groans that accompany the special attacks sound clear and crisp. Gameplay wise, I think it does have a certain pull about it that makes you want to come back for some more, and the other secret warriors contribute to the amount of time you'll spend playing. The main difference from the Virtua series is that Tohshinden has the less than realistic fireballs and super attacks that bring in the element of fantasy fighting. However, some of the comeback moves are ridiculously hard to pull off, giving your opponent the time to dish out a real good kicking. The relatively limited amount of moves (compared to Virtua Fighter) means that good combos won't be as easy to find, but overall this is good enough to silence the Playstation owners until Wipeout makes their misery complete.

COMMENT



MARCUS

Quite why anyone would want to invest in this with Virtua Fighter Remix already out there and Virtua Fighter 2 just weeks away is beyond me. Although this plays fairly well, the curiously angular characters are difficult to take seriously, and the whole affair is steeped in the sort of self-important nonsense that drags down so many beat 'em ups. If you're a genre addict then this won't disappoint you, but if you can wait for Virtua Fighter 2 then I really wouldn't bother putting up with second best.

GRAPHICS 82

▲Good intro and cut screens, and the different viewpoints work well.

▼Too similar to Virtua Fighter.

ANIMATION 84

▲The characters all move well and their reactions to hits look good.

▼Sometimes they can look a bit jerky.

MUSIC 86

▲The tunes are all good and tend to fit the characters well.

EFFECTS 82

▲The post fireball sounds are OK and the moans are pretty well done too.

PLAYABILITY 84

▲Lots of difficulty settings to play under and finding the comebacks is worth playing for.

LASTABILITY 81

▲Finding the secret fighters will take a bit of time.

▼Hasn't got the lifespan of Virtua, because it has fewer moves.

OVERALL

A good conversion that has the misfortune of arriving at the same time as Fighter 2.
A worthy alternative, however.

82

VIRTUA COP

BY	SEGA (AM2)
RELEASE	DECEMBER
PRICE	£49.99
GAME TYPE	TARGET SHOOTING

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1-2 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD OR GUN

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
VARIES

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
GUN:EXCELLENT

ORIGIN

AM2's massive coin-op of last year, converted with amazing integrity to the Saturn. A descendent of all target games.

GAME AIM

Take out the baddies and avoid hurting civilians in three large scrolling levels.

BEAT THIS

COMPLETE EXPERT LEVEL



Is it possible to reconcile the two namby-pamby blow-dried stars of Virtua Cop with our own traditional bobbies? Rage and Smarty, as they so style themselves, sport fetching kevlar jackets and teased tinted hair. Put them on crowd duty at a Millwall game, and the long arm of the law might go decidely limp at the wrist.

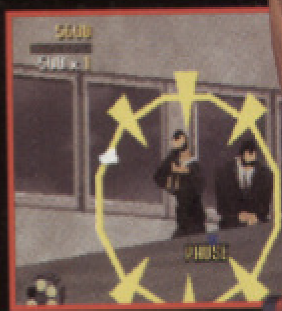
Or so you may have thought. But where our firm but good-hearted coppers might give a transgressor a clip round the air and send them on their way, Rage and Smarty are likely to pump them full of armour-piercing and call for the coroner. In their world, wear ecru and a pair of white slacks and your safety is assured. However, if you have a fetish for dressing like James Belushi in the Blues Brothers, you're asking for trouble. Especially if you happen to drift into a scene at a docks used for gun running/disused quarry/evil corporate headquarters...

RING OF DEATH

The cops wear computerised target specs that identify threats and ring them for easy aiming. The target changes colour from green to red as the target prepares to fire.









POLICE ACADEMY

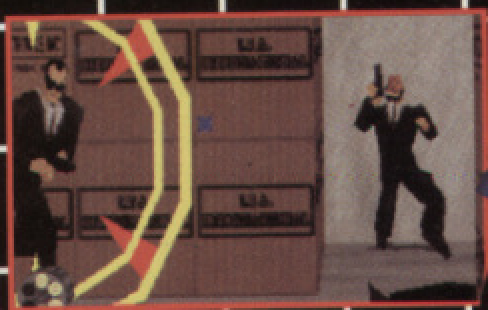
The Training Mode, lately included, is all-new to the Saturn version. Successive levels of black outline targets pop up for limited periods. To pass through training, a minimum hit ratio, and number of targets, must be reached. There's an alternative VS training option, where two play competitively, or take on one of the Virtua characters.



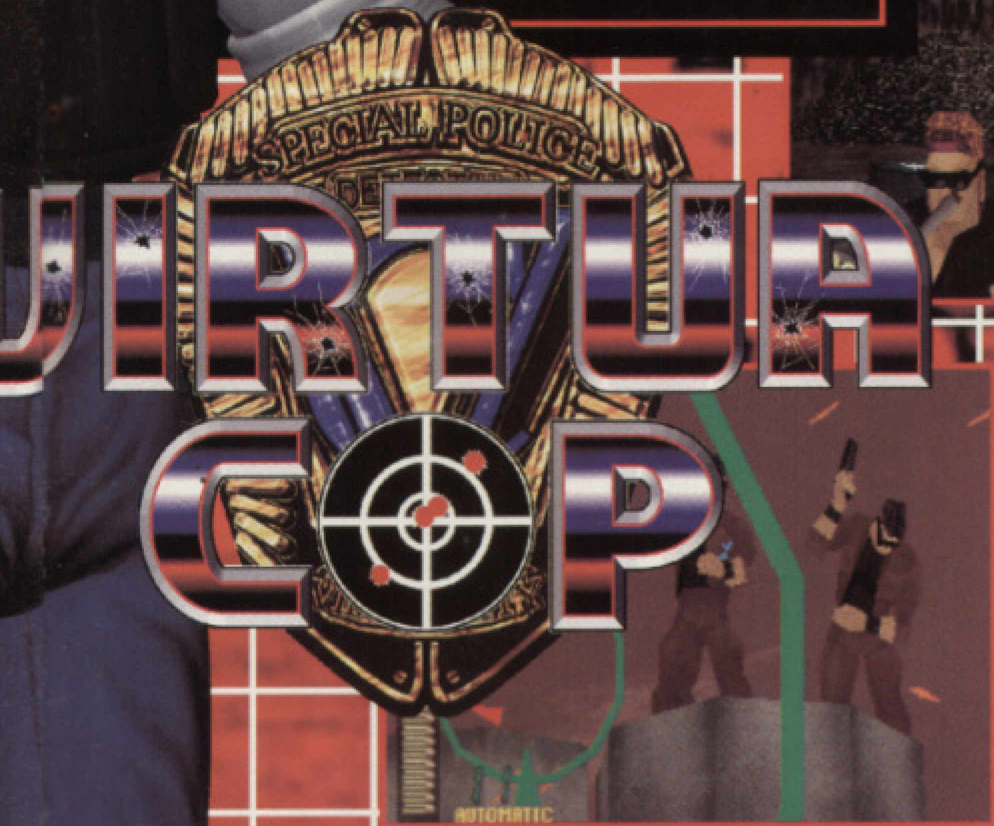


Three black bottles sitting on the wall,
And if one black bottle should accidently fall...



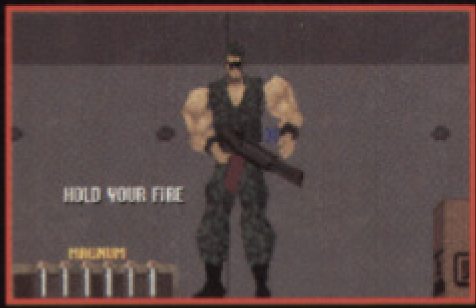






KHAKI CONFRONTATION

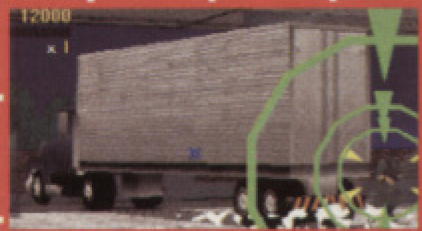
You face a figure in fatigues: your nemesis, at the end of each stage. He is armed with the game's deadliest piece: a multiple rocket-launcher that taxes you to the limit.











TNT

The red barrels nestling in the background should be exploited for their explosive properties. They can devastate the cars, crates and other cover used by baddies.









THE WRONG TYPES

Spotting a menace to society is easy with our mugshots of the morally compromised:



SUITS
Common or garden thugs, each sporting the obligatory black Burtons, tie and loafers.



HOODS
These axe-wielding maniacs pop up right in front of you and choose 'de rigeur' homeboy street gear.



TROOPS
The deadliest adversaries, these guys are into gas masks and chemical warfare outfits. Kinky, but deadly.



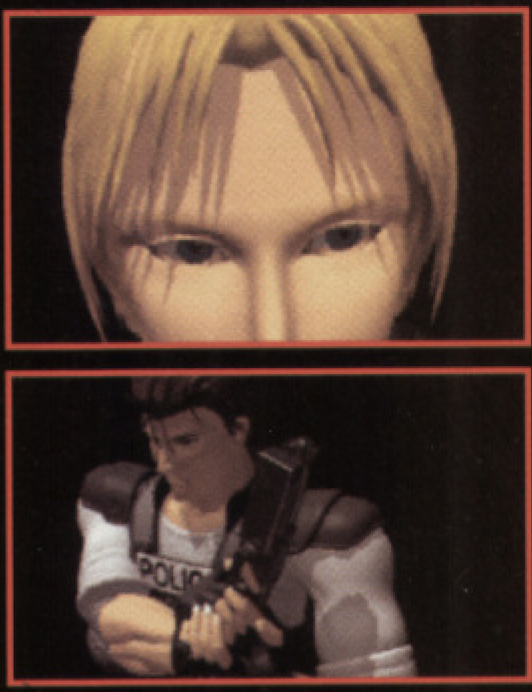
GRENADIERS
You never get a very good look at these types, as they only emerge from cover to lob hand-borne explosives your way.

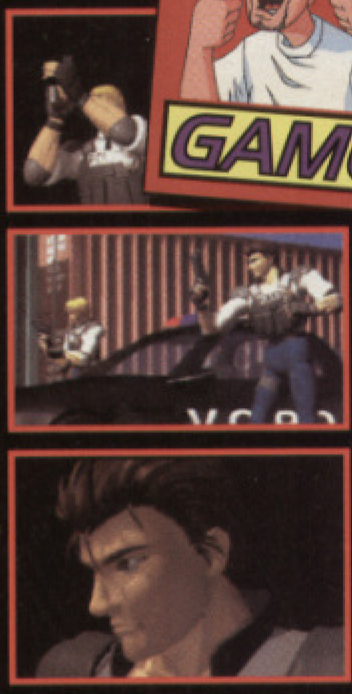


INTROSPECTIVE

Virtua Cop's intro is one of the coolest. There are actually several, integrating with the high score tables.







SUPER, SMASHING, GREAT!



It's not just who you aim at, but where you aim at that counts. Points per hit are awarded depending on the wound zone. A coveted bullseye strike is worth a whopping 5000 points — eight times a common or garden leg strike.





COMMENT



GUS

My favourite of the AM2 conversions. Virtua Cop is about the coolest game imaginable on console. However many times you play, you never lose the excitement of aiming and firing, knowing exactly how close your enemy is to returning. Virtua Cop is one of the few games to raise the hair on the back of your neck. And while the gameplay is exactly like the arcade, the graphics have lost nothing of their speed, smoothness, colour or detail. They look fantastic. The sound is brilliant, the layout and structure are equally excellent. Virtua Cop is the essential purchase for all Saturn owners this year. There are still some shopping days to Christmas. What are you waiting for?

COMMENT



MARCUS

I've always believed that there are two major problems with games of this type: the previously poor quality of their realisation and predictability killing prolonged gameplay. The sheer quality of Virtua Cop's execution (no pun intended) overcomes the first problem, making this simulated gunfest so engrossing that the second potential problem never has time to cross your mind. When played with a gun, Virtua Fighter so engrosses you that you take a starring role in Sega's very own Reservoir Dogs, totally oblivious to the outside world. And you really can't ask any more of console gaming than that. Even when you've completed this, you'll be itching to play it all over again. Virtua Fighter is, in fact, probably the closest Sega has yet come to recreating the arcade at home.

GRAPHICS 95

▲Ultra stylish settings make this look like an episode of the Streets of San Francisco or Reservoir Dogs: the game.

ANIMATION 95

▲Amazing – when you shoot a perp, he grabs the corresponding area of his body. The scaling is incredible.

MUSIC 92

▲Neat sounds; sort of funky cop show incidental music.

EFFECTS 91

▲The crackle of gun fire; the human carnage of casualties: "Don't shoot!" Fab.

PLAYABILITY 95

▲Playing with the gun is like no other console experience – an almost illegal rush.
▼The joypad cursor is slightly more fiddly.

LASTABILITY 91

▲The missions become impossibly hectic, but you can't stop playing. The carnage is compulsive.

OVERALL

The Saturn has a lethal weapon in the great console war. Virtua Cop is a devastator.

94



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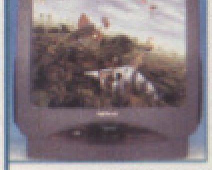
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BY	SEGA
RELEASE	TBA
PRICE	IMPORT (£20)
GAME TYPE	SHOOT 'EM UP
PLAYERS	1
MEG	4

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
5

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
GOOD

ORIGIN

A Game Gear take on the multi-format, multi-scrolling shoot 'em up classic.

GAME AIM

Run, slide, climb, jump and hover through level after level of hostile marauders.

BEAT THIS

BEAT THE LEVEL 1 BOSS

The Game Gear's days might be numbered, but there seems to be no shortage of quality titles appearing for the little grey box, even if they aren't all appearing on these shores. Gunstar Heroes stretches the mini-console pretty far by packing at least the flavour, if not the full breadth, of the shoot 'em up onto a mere 4 meg of hand-held fun. Drawing a veil over the incomprehensible and lengthy intro sequence, you're basically armed to the teeth by Japanese pixie-type wizards and sent on a killfest across everything from Mexican pyramids to the deck of a destroyer and some rather cute treehouses. Destroy everything in your path, especially the ridiculously muscular Rambo types in their colourful Third Reich style get-up. There's not much else to it really, but needless to say finding ever more inventive ways to kill ever more varied bad guys should keep you amused for quite a while..



BOSS MEN

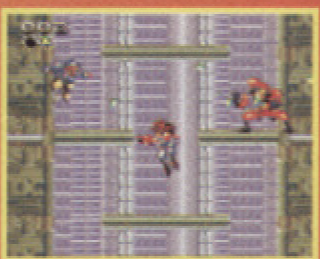
Gunstar Heroes is literally littered with maniacal nutters at every turn, just waiting for the opportunity to blow you away. They can take the form of animated pyramid blocks, Transformer-style robots and mad Nazi generals so don't stay still for too long – you'll probably be standing on one of them.



Perhaps the most bizarre boss in the entire game is this fire-breathing asparagus who sprays you with 'balloon bombs'. Dodge the bombs and stand underneath the plant so you can plug away at its 'head'. Then add butter and serve.



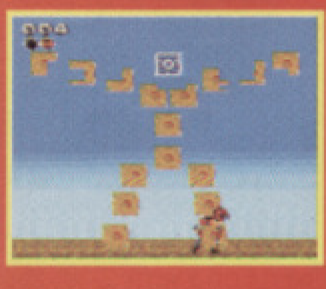
This feller's a giant version of one of the hovering US marines that chases you on the second level. He's especially difficult to kill thanks to his knack of being able to walk across ceilings, so you'll have to hover around to stay on target.



The third level is riddled with many navigational puzzles (some of them of a decidedly nautical nature) and bonkers blokes like this jackbooted general. Ignore his frenzied jumping up and down and put him out of everyone's misery.



This 'robot in disguise' is so efficiently armour-plated that only direct hits in certain areas will bring him down. Keep a steady height as best as you can and keep plugging away until he folds back into a lorry or something.



I don't know, one minute you're running along the top of a pyramid, next thing you know the pyramid's come alive and it's running all over the top of you. Sometimes you just can't win can you?











EUROVISION BOMB CONTEST

Playing Gunstar Heroes is a bit like joining the army – you travel the world, meet interesting people and get to kill them. Dank forests, balmy desert pyramids, underground wells and dark underground tunnels all bear witness to your decidedly cavalier gunplay.







GUNSTAR HEROES







GRAPHICS 82

▲Some imaginative and diverse sprites – the more complex bosses are especially impressive.

ANIMATION 81

▲Again, the bosses are the most impressive thing. Elsewhere animation scores when the game is at its most frenzied.

MUSIC 54

▼An excruciatingly tinny plink-plonk, even by Game Gear standards.

EFFECTS 60

▲Some fuzzy crunches complement the action when its at its busiest.

PLAYABILITY 84

▲Stretches the 'kill everything' format about as far as it can go on this platform.
▼It's perhaps a bit too difficult.

LASTABILITY 85

▲Diverse scenarios, lots of levels and varied enemies.
▼It's not a radical enough twist to convince those who dislike the genre.

OVERALL

Few surprises here, but a broad and varied shoot 'em up with real lastability.

85

COMMENT



GUS

The original Megadrive Gunstar Heroes was an underated classic, so I had high hopes for a similarly impressive Game Gear version. The graphics are remarkably similar to the original considering the machine's limitations. The action only really lets up when there's too much going on and enemies become lost in the background, though this is a minor irritation that disappears when you get engrossed in all the diverse levels. All the original bosses have made the transition and the Game Gear copes well trying to emulate the weird and wobbly effects that made the Megadrive game so appealing. This is a neat little shoot 'em up that has survived the scaling down process remarkably well. Well worth tracking down a copy if you can.

COMMENT



MARCUS

Gunstar Heroes passed me by on the SNES and Megadrive, but its reputation as a criminally undervalued title certainly didn't escape me here in the office. While the Game Gear version has apparently undergone something of a visual overhaul, the sprites remain true to the original version, and the gameplay is so fast and furious that it seems to burst out of the hand-held machine's tiny screen. The most positive thing about this is the sheer variety in gameplay – not only can you move around the game in almost any way imaginable, you can choose the snazzy weapon of your fancy and use it across a large number of diverse scenarios. This isn't going to win any prizes for pushing back the frontiers of game development, but it does the business in fine style.



BY: SEGA (AM3)

RELEASE: JANUARY

PRICE: £49.99

GAME TYPE: DRIVING

1-2 PLAYERS

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD/WHEEL

GAME DIFFICULTY
MEDIUM

CONTINUES
NONE

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
SUPERB

ORIGIN

Conversion of the hugely successful coin-op by AM3, Sega's world renowned development team.

GAME AIM

Race around three courses and beat your opponents to find secret tracks and cars.

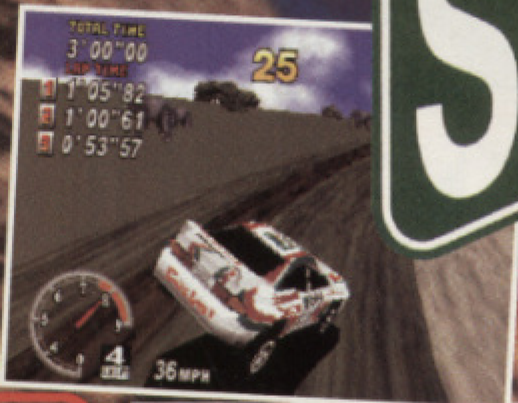
BEAT THIS

3RD ON MOUNTAIN STAGE

We've already looked at Virtua Fighter 2 and Virtua Cop, two of Sega's 'Big Three' new titles. Everything falls into place with Sega Rally, the last of the big guns that Sega are hoping will win them the super console war.

AM2 reshaped the way we look at racers today with their enormously popular Daytona USA. Not to be outdone, AM3 decided to turn all their man (and woman) power to producing an even bigger hit for the arcades. The fruits of their labours was the massive hit Sega Rally. Now AM3 have reprogrammed the game from scratch for Saturn, and the months of intensive research and work have come good. The tracks have all been recreated to resemble their arcade alter-egos, with as much detail as possible crammed in to keep the coin-op fans happy. The two player option has now been perfected, and despite being split screen it still manages to charge along at a fair rate of knots. Gear up for the ride of a lifetime.









I CHALLENGE YOU!

The versus mode has now been completed and adds a lot to the game's potential lastability. Each of the tracks is available to race on, and even though it's split screen, none of the speed and graphic detail have been lost. The number of laps can be changed from three to five, and each of the cars can be chosen. The learner drivers amongst you can also select to have a head start.



I bet someone has written the words "split screen" and "malarky" for this.



Here we are on two player mode, and the graphics on all this split screen malarky are just as good.

DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE

By now, most people are aware there is a secret track called Lakeside. Not to be confused with the retail park in Essex, this is the course to end all courses. To get to this feast of autumnal treats you have to come first in the final race, which is no mean feat. Then you'll be whisked off to Lakeside to witness all the golden leafy splendour of a spin in the countryside. Lovely.



Looks like the driver has taken advantage of the sponsor too much.

ENGINE'S GAWN GUV'NOR

If you get tired of the standard automobiles, then the option to customise your own little rust bucket is available. Here's a look at what you can change:



HANDLING

Change this from 1 to 5, with 1 being slow and 5 quick. The quicker the selection, the more responsive the car is, meaning you have to be more precise when taking corners

TRANSMISSION



This is straightforward. You can choose automatic or manual gear change. In manual mode the gears are changed with L and R buttons.



TYRES

Again from 1 to 5, but this time 1 is soft, and 5 is hard. If 5 is selected this time, the tyres will have maximum grip. Couple this with the handling to give a much more sensitive car all round.

FRONT SUSPENSION



Again from 1 to 5. This time the higher the number, the less bumps affect the front of the car. This seems to have less effect than the other settings.



BACK SUSPENSION

Exactly the same as the front suspension but this time with the back of the car. And again the effect it has is small and not all that noticable.

BLOW OFF VALVE



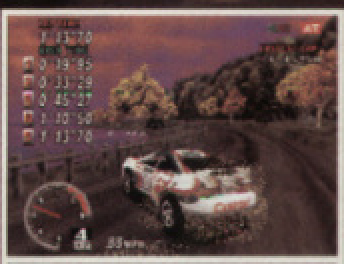
Quite what this does apart from provide some cheap laffs about farts is beyond us. Prrrppp! I don't know, silly boyish humour, eh?



It all began with a quiet drive one day...



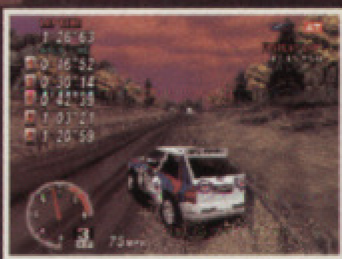
...when suddenly he suspected...



...that the exhaust was knackered! Oh no!



Luckily he was a member of the AA...



...and a very nice man came to fix it. The end.

DRIVING MISS DAISY



The game features a novel co-driver who blasts out instructions to you at every corner. Most of this is pretty helpful, along with the colour coded icons that appear showing the direction of the turn and the sharpness. Blue is an easy bend whereas red shows a particularly nasty one. The commentator is not in the two player mode, however, so any turns and bends will have to be negotiated unaided.







Does anyone believe in Road Rage? No, well GET THE HELL OUT OF MY WAY BEFORE I KILL YOU! IDIOT!

VERY SUSPICIOUS

The programmers have not only thrown in a secret track but also a hidden car as well. As yet, we are not allowed to print a picture of it but our sneaky disguise of the motor in question should give you a rough idea of what to expect. OK, it gives you no idea at all, but we did our best. You're assured a car with more speed than both the standard Celica and Delta, but this is infinitely harder to drive. Get searching folks.





COMMENT



MARCUS

Smooth, fast, atmospheric and compulsive. If you're only looking for one racing game (regardless of format) then look no further. What makes this so attractive is Sega's attention to detail in creating a racing simulation, as opposed to a straight driving game. Of course, this functions as both very well indeed, but has the added bonus of the sounds and sights that makes the whole experience almost tangible. To play devil's advocate for a moment, I consider this the weakest of Sega's 'Big Three' for a number of reasons. Firstly, it's not perfect – scenery doesn't suddenly loom at you the way it did in Daytona, but it's still not clipping free. Secondly, the relatively leisurely pace this takes (compared to Daytona and other high speed games) means that your long term playability will be reduced to shaving seconds off your best time for each course. But I'm splitting hairs – this is undeniably state of the art. At least until the goalposts are moved again.

COMMENT



STEVE

This is the icing on the cake for Sega owners, another watertight argument in favour of buying a Saturn. This game is awesome. The graphics are pushing the Saturn to its limits and the result is an ultra smooth, hyper fast conversion of the top arcade game. The clipping that drew Daytona's main criticisms has now been reduced, bringing the slick 3-D images to our homes in superb fashion. The commentator is a little annoying but tunes are generally good and Rally scores top marks for me in the playability stakes. This is one of the few driving games that I just want to play and play just to try and better times or work out how to take a corner more effectively. Despite having only three tracks (and Lakeside) these are sufficiently difficult to keep lastability high as well. What more can I say? Invest your cash on this, or be faced with a life of boredom.

GRAPHICS 95

▲Clipping is at a new low and the 3-D graphics create an excellent racing environment.

ANIMATION 90

▲Details on the car look good, even when taking corners.
▼The people could move around a bit.

MUSIC 93

▲Music throughout the game is generally good, with some good beats man!

EFFECTS 92

▲The crash noises are OK and the commentator, if a little annoying sometimes, is generally helpful.

PLAYABILITY 95

▲Top notch. Trying to better old times and master courses provides a lot of entertainment.

LASTABILITY 94

▲Some may feel let down by 'merely' three tracks, but they are tough to master, and there are some secrets as well.

OVERALL

The completion of Sega's new wave of games is the cherry on the cake. Brilliant stuff and definitely worth a look.

95



BY	TEAM 17
RELEASE	JANUARY
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	PUZZLE

1-8 PLAYERS

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
N/A

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
VERY GOOD

ORIGIN

Another PC-originated puzzle game featuring cute characters and wanton destruction.

GAME AIM

Destroy four 'enemy' worms before they do the same to you, in a best of three rounds battle.

BEAT THIS

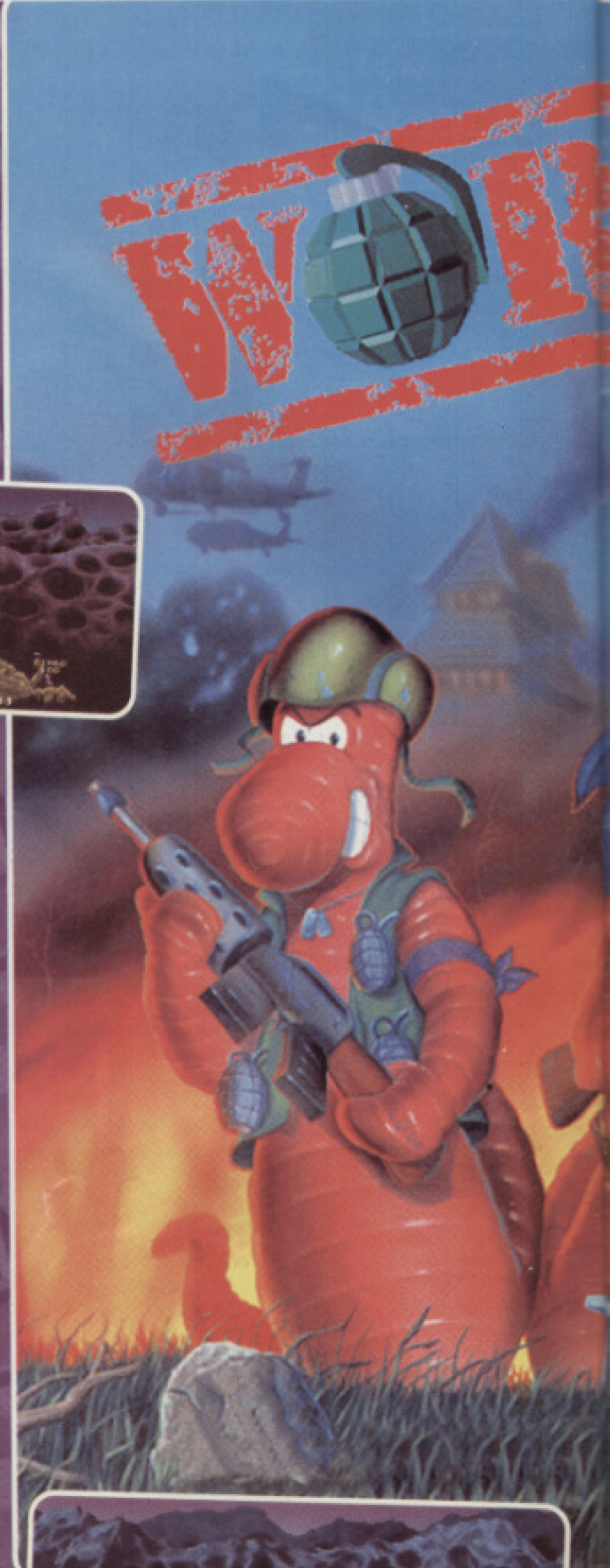
WIN EIGHT ROUNDS

Unfortunate bodily mishaps and diseases seem to be cropping up in all sorts of games at the moment. Boogerman based a whole game around farts, snots and bogeys, Super Skidmarks provided us with unlimited cheap gags, and now Worms. What next, we wonder? A game called Piles where you have to defeat the evil Wart Man in a struggle to end all straining and constipation?

One of the many PC puzzlers currently taxing the nation's brains, Worms was the brainchild of Team 17, who are also behind this conversion which is their first foray into the world of the Saturn. The aim is simple: kill as many worms as possible using underhand and devious tactics. There are thousands of pre-generated backgrounds to use, each with their own accompanying hazards.

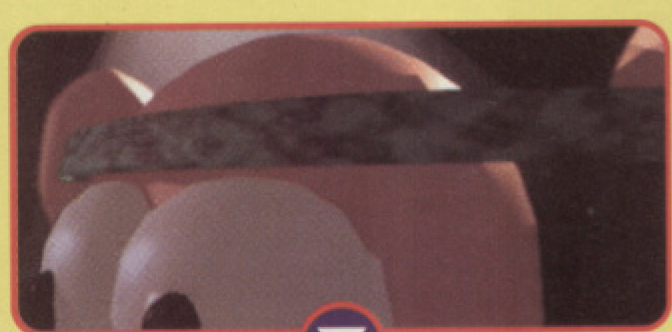


Should any unfortunate invertebrate fall into the sea, then I'm afraid it's goodnight Vienna. The game can be played in a variety of different formats from a single, best of three rounds fight, or as a league battle with a number of teams all competing for the honour of being Champion Worm. Or if you fancy a bit of a group battle then you can have three or four teams participating at once.

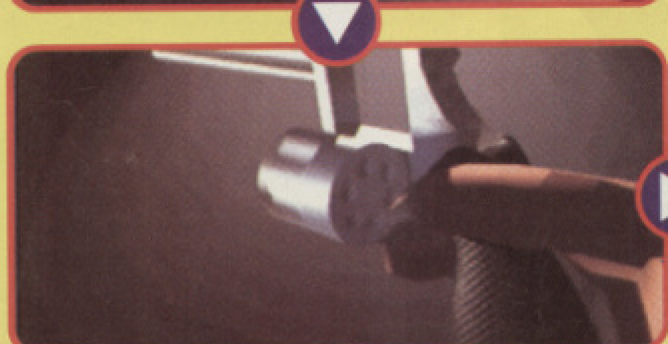


WORM YOUR WAY OUT OF THAT

The game is split up by a number of rendered sequences that show the lighter side of slaughter and destruction. For instance, the intro shows a worm tooling up Rambo style with head bands and knives ready for a mega battle. He then topples over because he's holding too much! Class. Other comedic intro mishaps include worms teleporting onto a minefield and being melted by a flame thrower. Each time, the worms sport puzzled and shocked facial expressions, adding to the mirth.





















BAZOOKA JOE

As you can see, there are a number of icons to muse over. If they all seem a little confusing (after all, who reads instruction manuals?) cast your eyes over our guide to the most useful ones...

1 2 3 4

LONG RANGE

These are the attacks for looping over objects and backgrounds. The homing doesn't always hit directly so use with a little discretion.

5 6

CLEAR SCENERY

These two can be used for getting through tiny parts of scenery, and for small hits on opponents. Watch out for the kickback though.

7 8 9 10

CLOSE RANGE

These are the nasty moves for doing serious damage. With 9 and 10, walk away quick or you'll be caught in the blast.

11 12

MULTIPLE

Use this on close together worms for a wide range attack.

MOVE

Easy. Teleport to anywhere in the screen.

13 14

CLEAR SCENERY

These are for making longer tracks into the earth. Both can inflict damage to anyone in the way.

15 16 17

MOVE WORM

If you need elevating but have no teleports you can use the ropes. The girder can build paths over gaps.

18

KAMI-KAZE

19

SLY

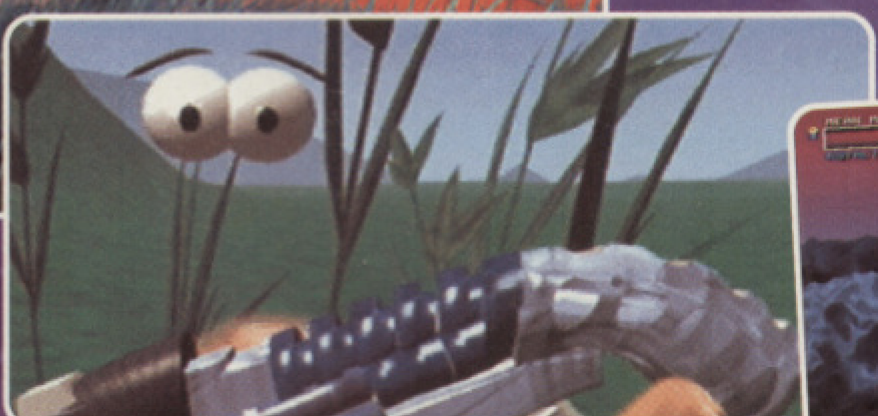
If an opponent is near the edge of a cliff, a gentle nudge will see them off. Works well on ice.

20

21

END GO

If one of your worms is not needed, them he can skip go. 21 is a desperate last measure only.











GET 'EM RINGO

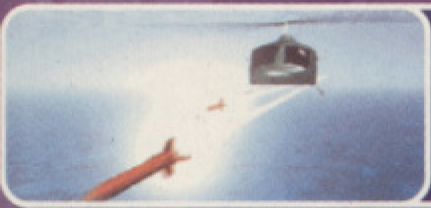
One of the more novel features is the ability to custom-name any of the worms you play with or against. There are a number of saved teams already in the game, and each vary in their strength. The Fab Four are reformed Beatle worms, so if the chance to blow the crap out of Ringo and Paul is your idea of fun, then this is for you. You can also be the Ferrari Testerossa, or a spoon if you so desire.





The sudden death takes all worms life to 1, then you fight.





The missile is fired, and the result is the grilled worm on the right.



YOU'LL REGRET THAT

One of the funniest parts of the game is the speech from the worms themselves. After you have killed or injured a worm, they follow it up with a volley of verbal to let you know their immediate feelings. All of them are in suitably squeaky, high pitched voices that make them sound even funnier. And if you manage to blow up yourself or one of your team mates, the abuse gets a touch on the sarcastic side, just to make you feel even more stupid. When your worm finally kicks the bucket, they decide to kill themselves by detonating a miniature bomb, preceded by a little "bye, bye" to gain your sympathy.



COMMENT



STEVE

Being a lover of puzzle type games, this title really appeals to me. The idea is a novel one, and brings a fresh aspect to the genre. The intro and other cut screens are quite amusing to watch, and even though the overall graphics are small they are detailed enough in a Lemmings type way. The game's humour becomes more evident the longer you play, especially with the speech and the facial expressions. The main pulling power of this, however, is the playability. The amount of teams available to bundle together for a league means you'll have to put a lot of playing in to master this, and with the computer opponents being a lethal shot, the chances of long-term gaming are good. Great stuff.

COMMENT



MARCUS

This is just the type of quality puzzler the Saturn needs to round out its initial selection of games. While perhaps not in the same league as the mighty Lemmings, this is streets ahead of recent efforts like Zoop, and is likely to appeal to anyone who finds the Baku Baku school of cutesy Japanese puzzlers a bit nauseating. On the down side, the graphics are little bit fiddly and the gameplay, while very addictive, is something of an acquired taste. Also, I don't whether it's just me being a bit rubbish, but I found the one player mode so severe it made everything a bit offputting. Play this against someone else, however, and it's superb.

GRAPHICS 88

▲Excellent intro sections and small, but well defined, graphics.
▼Backgrounds are a bit too similar in places.

ANIMATION 90

▲The worms themselves are as realistic as could have been hoped, and their size isn't a problem.

MUSIC 79

▼There is only one in-game tune, which gets a tad boring after a while.

EFFECTS 91

▲The speech is excellent and really adds to the game's sense of humour. The death cries are good too.

PLAYABILITY 90

▲Two player mode is excellent, and even in one player you have to come back to beat the computer.

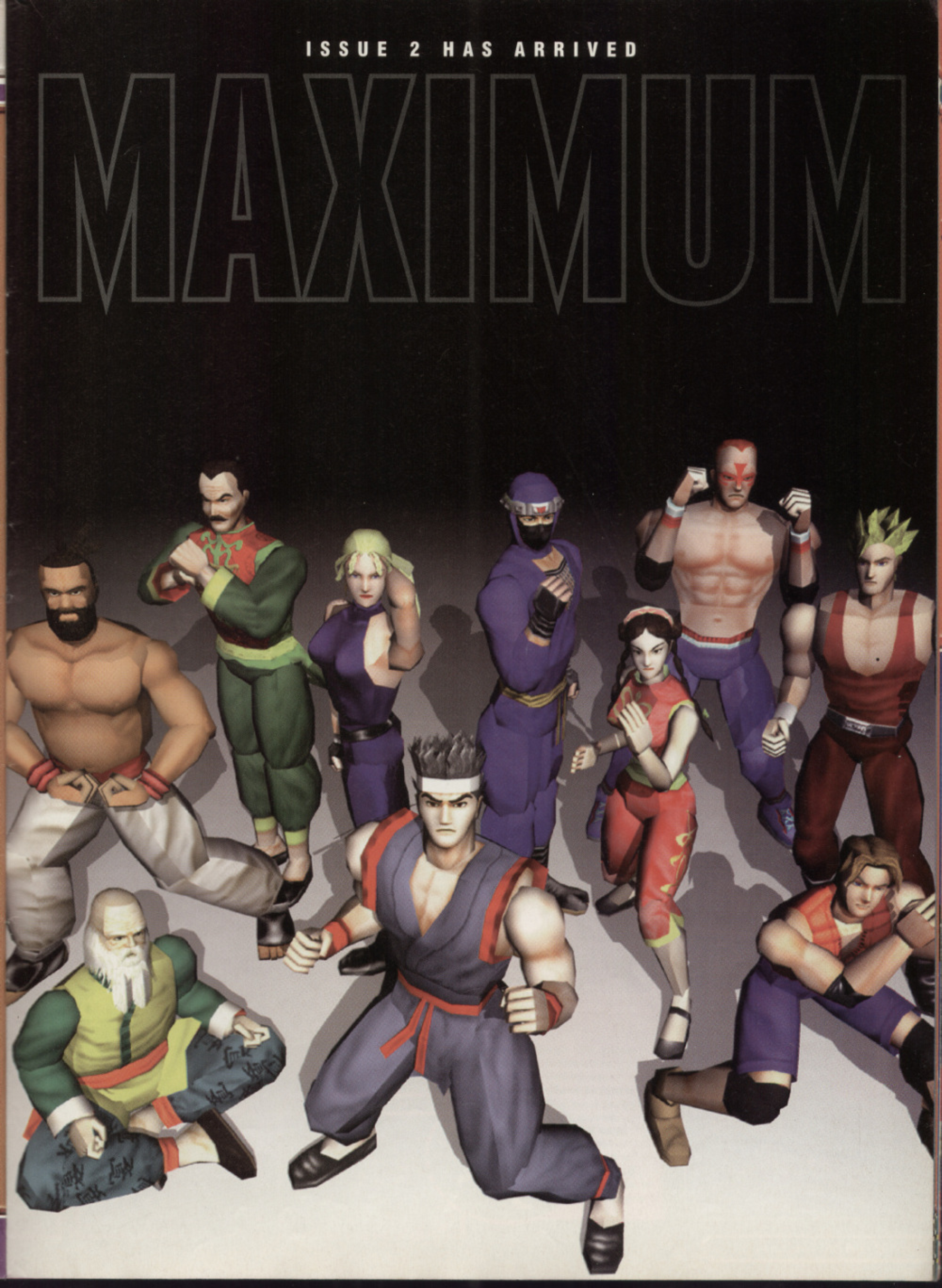
LASTABILITY 87

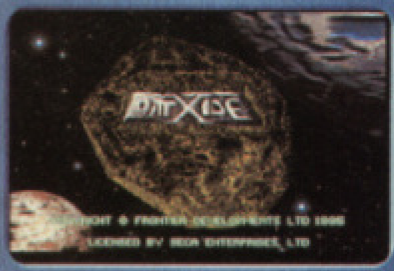
▲The league format encourages a lot of long term use.
▼Some may resist from playing one player mode because the computer is merciless.

OVERALL

An excellent puzzler that oozes playability but, discounting the rendered sequences, doesn't quite maximise the Saturn's potential.

87


ISSUE 2 HAS ARRIVED
MAXIMUM



BY	SEGA
RELEASE	JANUARY
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SHOOT 'EM UP
PLAYERS	1
MEG	16

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
NONE

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
OKAY

ORIGIN

Created by Frontier Developments, headed by David Braben, the man behind Elite. Shares some similarities.

GAME AIM

Destroy, asteroids, rescue miners, annihilate aliens.

BEAT THIS

21,200

It was John Major that first advocated going 'Back to Basics', an idea that was received with all the contempt it deserved. But a similar idea is sweeping through the games industry. Darxide, the work of David Braben who put together one of the most complex game concepts ever – Elite, stays true to the plot and essence of Asteroids, an Atari vector coin-op of 1980.

The plot is simple: blast all the asteroids in the field before the bash into you, and take out the odd scudding alien too. Your ship is a little more sophisticated than the pitiful pointer of the prehistoric original – in a wonder of press-on technology, it now has wings. Four of them, heavily impregnated with laser armament. And if that doesn't keep you fresh and dry, nothing will.



DAR





GET YOUR ROCK OFF

The asteroids start as huge, tumbling monoliths that crumble under your lasers into smaller and faster fragments. All of these rotate and with impressive fully-textured surfaces. An exploding 'roid sometimes leaves a booster bonus or power-up. Look out for them on the scope.





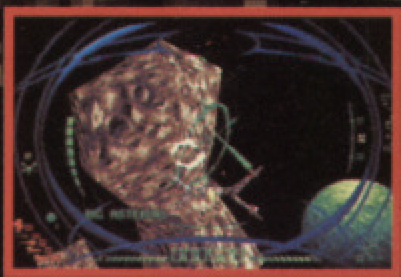


MANIC MINERS

Innocent mining personnel cling to the surface of the asteroids amidst the battlezone and are left spinning in space when their refuge is destroyed. You must retrieve them before asphyxiation or stray laser blasts take their toll. The miner's cries help locate them, as nifty spatial audio creates a 3-D effect.









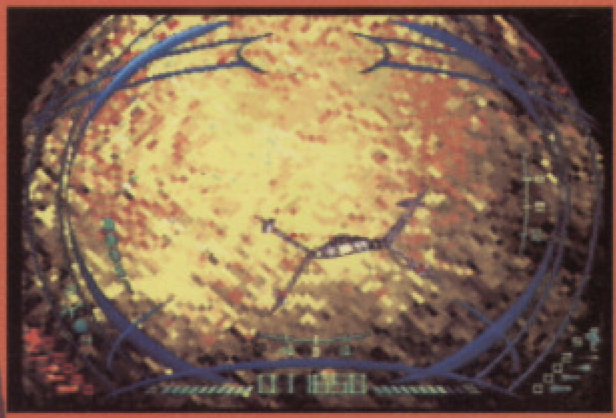




XIDE

BLUE MOON

Your efforts to comply with mission briefings are limited by the approach of the moon during each session. A time limit is symbolised by its slow scaling approach. Failure to complete all objectives means losing a life.

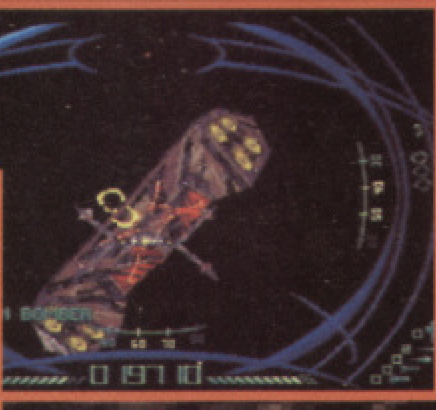


YOU F.O.

Aliens have chosen the traditional 'close encounters' saucer shape for their craft. These swirl around reducing your shield values when they can. They also attack the miners' shuttles on some mission and must be eliminated!









COMMENT



GUS

I've altered my opinion of Darxide as I've continued playing it. Even this comment has undergone changes, as the gameplay itself became much more promising. There are several cool things about Darxide; the music, the inertial control, the texture-mapping and neat light-sourcing. The game does have some atmosphere. But initially it seems devoid of drama, with little apart from time limits to tax you. However, five or so missions into the game and things pick up – groovy alien saucers swirl around your ship, huge bombers chuck proton torpedoes at you, and although you'd never have suspected it, the game becomes quite chaotic. Darxide is at heart a homage to Asteroids, and not the most amazing game on a console, but it's an unusually concentrated blast fest for the 32X.

COMMENT



MARCUS

David Braben refuted my suggestion that Darxide strongly resembles the combat sequences from Elite. Nevertheless, similarities continued to nag me throughout this. While Gus is right in saying the gameplay becomes more varied as the levels unfold (the chance to act as 'convoy fighter escort' midway through the game is a welcome break) you're ultimately playing 3-D Asteroids with knobs on. Plus points include the excellent texture-mapped asteroids, the nifty lock-on targetting system and the depth-cued sound. Points off, however, for the limited scenario and strung out gameplay which evolves too slowly. As a component of a broader game, Darxide would have added some superb spacebound atmosphere. As it stands, it's a strangely 'empty' experience that fails to excite.

GRAPHICS — 86

▲Texture-mapped asteroids and an impressive player vehicle.

▼There's not enough going on in space.

ANIMATION — 83

▲Good movement in 3-D and excellent miner animation.

▼Some jerkiness and slowdown with a lot onscreen.

MUSIC — 88

▲Lots of excellent synth-based tunes.

EFFECTS — 87

▲Good all-round effects, with clear speech and use of spatial sound.

PLAYABILITY — 76

▲Has the pleasing simplicity of Asteroids and 3-D shooters.

▼A sense of danger enters the game much later on.

LASTABILITY — 78

▲New game elements with each successive mission.

▼The same scenario all the way through becomes limiting.

OVERALL

A slickly realised though underbaked space odyssey of arcade simplicity — but it does pick up considerably.

79



BY SEGA

RELEASE TBA

PRICE TBA

GAME TYPE PUZZLE

BREAKDOWN

1-2 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
CHALLENGING

CONTINUES
NONE

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
GOOD

ORIGIN

A fruit 'n' veg version of Puyo Puyo, complete with a menagerie of cute critters. Destined for the arcades and the Saturn in 1996.

GAME AIM

Enlist careful strategy and helpful hungry animals to clear your screen of tumbling blocks of food.

BEAT THIS

Clear Stage 4.

BAKU BAKU

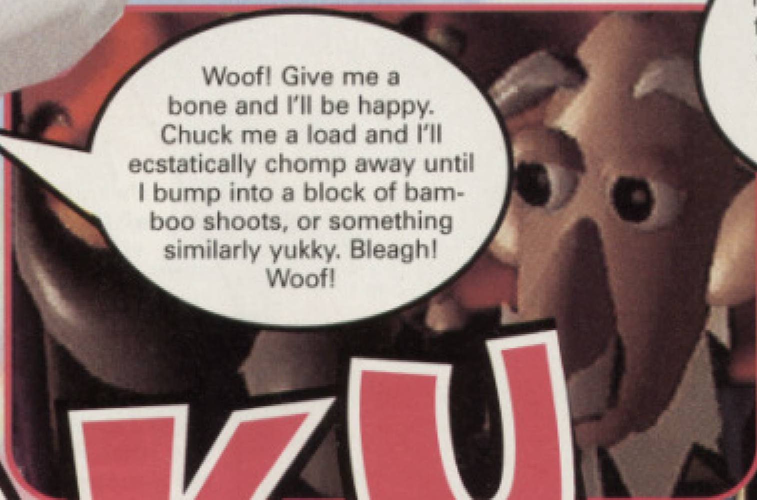
As regular readers will know, cute games have had a long and chequered history. Fluffy bunny rabbits, cuddly hedgehogs and cheeky foxes have all come and gone. Never in the history of gaming, however, have so many cutesy animals come together for such a colossal clash of the cutesy titans.

Baku Baku is another spin on Puyo Puyo that requires precision layering of your tumbling blocks in order for disintegration-friendly patterns to form within your amassed pile. In this instance, you play Connect 4 with bananas, bamboo, bones and carrots, in the hope that a passing monkey, panda, dog or rabbit will fall out of the sky and munch a nice long line of them. Which isn't as improbable as you might suppose. Unlike Tetris, where your aim is simply to clear your screen as efficiently as possible, Baku Baku sees you carefully time your gameplay so you amass as much junk as possible, then have it eaten as quickly as possible so a large part of it can then be offloaded onto your hapless opponent. The task is made easier by magic Baku Baku gold coins which dissolve all examples of the foodstuffs they land on, and harder by devious opponents with sharp timing. So, if I can tear Claire away from the cutest game of the year, he goes...





Woof! Give me a bone and I'll be happy. Chuck me a load and I'll ecstatically chomp away until I bump into a block of bamboo shoots, or something similarly yukky. Bleagh! Woof!



Thankfull I restrict my ir habits to rabbits favourite pursuit carrots. Luckily plenty around f gobble u







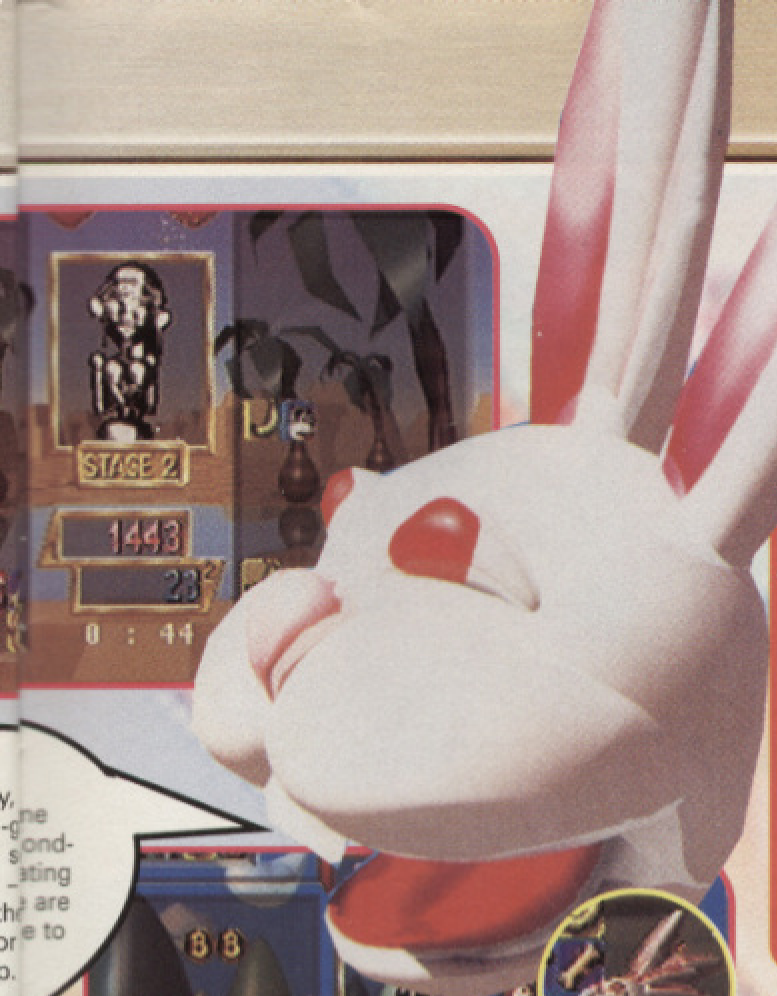


I'm a cheeky pink-bottomed chappie with a fondess for bananas. I'll cheerfu chomp cratefuls giv the opportunity.





Seeing as I'm a panda, I plump for bamboo shoots as my chosen chunks of sustenance. Line up as many rows of the hard chewy stuff as you can for me.



COMMENT



MARCUS

Although not one of the 'hardest' of AM3's forthcoming Saturn titles, Baku Baku oozes a childish naivete that makes it difficult to ignore. Gameplay is cleverly pitched on several levels, meaning you and your opponents' chosen strategies dictate the difficulty of the game you're playing. These factors combined make for a game that should appeal to grown-up puzzle buffs as much as it does to children. Even if the graphics are bit too much, and the barf bucket certainly beckoned me on several occasions, you never lose sight of the solid, engrossing game underneath. And if you're a fan of high-grade Japanese kitsch then you won't go far wrong either. Recommended.

COMMENT



STEVE

The Japanese have a strange fetish for cute animals and fluffy bunnies, as does Claire, but when they are combined in a game like this I'm definitely not complaining. This is absolutely brilliant. The graphics are well rendered and it's quite funny when you see the dogs and pandas come chomping down. It's equally as pleasing to watch your opponent's face when you've collected 60 bricks ready to drop all over him (Yes, hilarious – Marcus). The tunes are cutesy and annoying, but that is only to be expected. It's painfully addictive and has already wasted hours of time in the MEAN MACHINES office. Many more will be frittered away in the coming weeks. I think Marcus may have been a little harsh on this – it's excellent stuff.





THE MUNCH BUNCH

The chief protagonists in Baku Baku are a hungry pack of animals whose bouts of frenzied feeding rarely affect their high-scoring on the cute-ometer. A random assortment of creatures drop out of the sky, along with the tumbling blocks of food. If any of them 'connect' with a meal of their preference then they'll happily munch away as many linking blocks as they can before disappearing off the screen.

GRAPHICS — 82

▲Lots of shiny renders in Sega's virtual zoo of cutesies. Gratifyingly basic and clutter free.

ANIMATION — 80

▲Smooth and detailed, the frenzied animal chomps are especially fun.

MUSIC — 30

▼Cheesy kindergarten ditties that match the sugar-sweet graphics.

EFFECTS — 81

▲Chomps and KOs are suitably crunchy and forceful.

PLAYABILITY — 83

▲Engaging, engrossing and enjoyable gameplay.
▼Mastering the most productive technique may take a while.

LASTABILITY — 87

▲Largely down to the quality of your opponent (and your kitsch threshold).
▼The game's partial reliance on luck may put some off long-term play.

OVERALL — 84

Too sugary for some, perhaps, but this is highly polished and devilishly addictive.



BY: SEGA

RELEASE: NOW

PRICE: IMPORT (£65)

GAME TYPE: RACING

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD/WHEEL

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
NONE

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
GOOD

ORIGIN

Another attempt at conveying the fast and furious world of Formula 1 Motor Racing.

GAME AIM

Take on 23 fellow drivers and speed your way to pole position before the laps are up.

BEAT THIS

WIN ADVANCED

F-1 Live information

Murray Walker is a slaphead. Although he does seem to know what he's talking about, his style of commentary translates it in the most bizarre way. And he is also cursed with one of the worst cases of bad timing ever. Take the time when Mansell approached the final lap of a race leading by miles, and Murray chirped that he was bound to win. Mansell promptly developed engine failure and was forced to retire a mere 500 yards from the finishing line. Bummer. "Oh, I don't believe it!" shouts the gobsmacked Murray, having added another clip to the Aunties' Sporting Bloomers collection. The man needs help.



The 'Live Information' element of this new game is provided by Tokyo's equivalents of our beloved baldie, Mulley Walker-San. But the fact that all their waffle is in Japanese means that we don't need to pay it any more attention than usual. Commentary aside, what we have here is the game of the F1 Championship that has aroused the passions of our nation as Damon 'I've got Caterpillars for eyebrows' Hill battles it out with Michael 'It's really pronounced' Shoemaker for the mantle of World Champion. By the time you read this it will of course long be over, with Shoemaker and Benetton cleaning up. Like a married couple, their antics and arguments, and the recent tragic deaths and serious crashes, have caused the sport's profile to rise quite dramatically. Never one to pass up some publicity, Sega have snapped up the rights for the use of all F1-related doobries and the result is the game you see before you...

COMMENT



MARCUS

Scooby Doo trees. That's the problem with this game. Do you remember how in the classic Hanna-Barbera cartoon the backgrounds to chase sequences were punctuated with the same ten trees zooming past over and over again? Well in F1 Live Information (daft title) we become familiar with the same 'blocks' of trees, albeit in varying colours, over and over again. Things don't get much better in Monte Carlo, where the city's rich architecture is reduced to bland and flat-looking Lego structures, all of which start to look very samey. Looks aside, this plays very well, with a realistic car action and tight, responsive, controls. The inset television screen is very impressive and the commentary might even add something if it's translated for these shores. But if how your racing games look is as important to you as how they play (and they are, after all, partly simulations) then this might disappoint.

IT MUST BE THE BENDS

An inset screen in the top right shows a simulated television broadcast of the race. If your car's languishing at the back you'll see multiple camera angles of the leader's quest for glory. If a major pile up occurs, it will cut quickly to that to bring the viewers up to the minute footage. Other noteworthy incidents liable to attract the attention of the camera include a driver retiring after a spin or a pit stop.



COURSE WE CAN

There are six different tracks to race your way around. Three of them are actual tracks from the F1 circuit, and the others come in the form of Sega's own distinctive layout.





GRAND PRIX CIRCUITS

HOCKENHEIM



This is probably a good course to start off with, as it doen't have that many sharp turns. There is one linked to a steep rise near the grandstand.

SUZUKA



The stakes move up here as this course is much tougher. There are lots of small turns and a couple of particularly nasty ones.

MONTECARLO



This is easily the toughest of the GP circuits, and features lots of tight corners and turns. Not much room for overtaking either, so careful when passing.

SEGA MOTOR LAND CIRCUITS

NOVICE



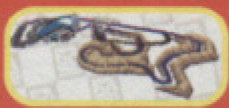
As you may be able to work out, this is the least taxing of these three courses. It only has one real tough turn, which is again around the top.

ADVANCED



This time it's the novice course with knobs on. A few more twists and a couple of turns make it slightly tougher. Watch out for the turn before the finish

EXPERT



Guess what? It's the advanced track with a few knobs on! This time there are a significant amount of changes to the layout, enabling a much trickier track. Too many turns to name, just lots of them.



CAN YOU FIX ME UP?

Before you start each race, to have the opportunity to customise your car. The less adventurous among you can stick to changing the tyres and fuel, the more technical can change the angle of the two front wings. As you skip You can carry as much as 200 litres of fuel, and the tyres can be of a UHT Long Life variety, or the Tough Grip type, which give you more control.





Discover Monte Carlo It's not just a semi-autocratic playpen for capitalist pigs!

COMMENT



STEVE

After the small disappointment of Hang On, I think that this is a slightly better game all round. The graphics are the one aspect that probably isn't on par with Hang On, as they tend to be a little jerky and rough in places, but I found this a bit more exciting to play as a whole. The feeling of picking up speed is excellent when you are going through tunnels and bridges, but get in an open space and suddenly the effect is lost. The tracks are of a good variety, and difficulty is also well balanced. There are also a good range of cars to choose from and the inclusion of real Formula 1 teams is a good addition for the officianadoes. However, the commentary is annoying and there should really be a two player mode. Not too bad though – real racing freaks should especially enjoy this.

GRAPHICS 80

▲Superb intro, and good detail on the cars.

▼Terrible clipping and jerkiness in some places.

ANIMATION 78

▼Nobody moves in the pit lane. They look like cardboard cut outs.

MUSIC 84

▲Enjoyable tunes, but no groundbreaking stuff.

EFFECTS 88

▲Realistic engine noises and revs.

▼Shut that bloody commentator up!

PLAYABILITY 84

▲The car handles well, meaning you don't get frustrated whilst playing. Manual and Automatic gears are always good variations.

LASTABILITY 81

▲The chance to beat Shumacher is always worth coming back for.

▼There aren't many courses to beat him on.

OVERALL

Good fun to play, but some rough graphic areas mar the overall effect.

84

HANG ON GP'95

BY SEGA

RELEASE OUT NOW

PRICE IMPORT (£65)

GAME TYPE RACING

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
NONE

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
SLIPPERY

ORIGIN

A pacy and smooth-looking Daytona on a motorbike.

GAME AIM

Bomb around six courses, either in competition against other bikers or in an attempt to better your time.

BEAT THIS

Cup winner on courses 1-3.





In the age of the 3-D driving game, Daytona USA rules the Saturn roost as the current 'must have' purchase. Before Sega Rally moves the goalposts, Hang On GP '95 looks set to sneak over the finishing line and steal a bit of glory for itself.

You know the routine – narrow winding roads, a couple of tunnels, some interesting background aerial activity and a bridge thrown in for good measure. Hang On meets all these essential credentials and adds one cunning twist – you survey this visual splendour not from the comfort of a racing car, but from the front seat of a speeding motorbike. Pretty smart, huh?

OK, so it's not the most original twist on a well-worn theme, but Hang On's transition to Saturn nevertheless marks a first for the console. Until Sega see fit to convert Manx TT, this could be the best way to notch up a ton on two-wheels without leaving your house.



UNEASY RIDER

It's not terribly easy to prang your bike in GP – minor mistakes are usually rewarded with a slight juddering or merely a bounce – but when you do the results are spectacular. Your bike somersaults away from its obstacle, flying across the screen before colliding with the ground. Although impressive, at no point did we ever repeatedly drive into walls simply to watch all this. Dearie me no.





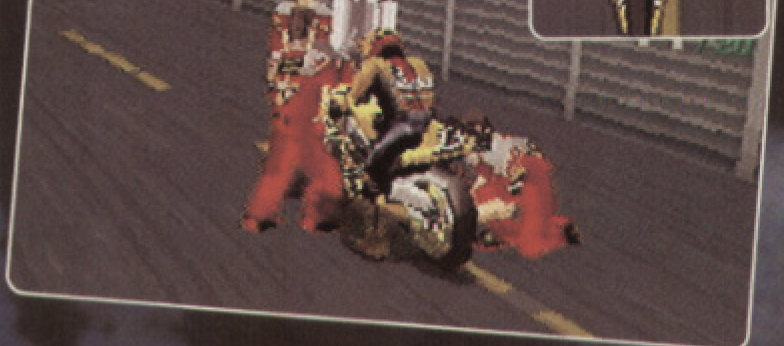
PIT ON THE SIDE

Repair work is essential on long hauls – even the most finely tuned machine will let you down if it's overstretched. To make a pit stop, calculate whether you can afford the time and pull into the signposted detour points. Then sit back and watch someone else do all the hard work.













COMMENT



MARCUS

The first thing that strikes you about this is the quality of its appearance – photo-realistic mountain ranges form the backdrop to fast-moving roadways. Everything is well realised with a minimum of clipping that sets this in a different league from Daytona, if not quite in the Premier Division of the forthcoming Sega Rally. Had the control and appearance of your bike on the screen matched the quality of the background and 3-D graphics then everything would have been swell. Sadly, your angular-wheeled dream machine leans alarmingly at the slightest influence of the joypad, and any collisions or bumps reduce you to a juddery pinball bouncing all over the road. You're left with a fast-moving travelogue that's best admired from a distance.

COMMENT



STEVE

This game produced a mini-argument in the office about its overall score – not because it's good, but sadly because it's a bit dodgy. The motorbike looks like it's stuck to the floor with super glue, and the only thing that seems to move is the background. However, the backgrounds do move in an impressive way, creating the impression of a very fast-moving game. At the end of the day though, when I built up a lot of speed I'd clip the side and stack my bike in spectacular fashion. Even if I didn't write the machine off, I'd be pranged around from side to side like an Arielette in a washing machine. This could have been the surprise title of the year, but unfortunately it's just crap.

GRAPHICS 88

▲Backdrops are detailed, buildings look solid and there is rich variety between the courses.
▼Your bike looks like it's made of Lego.

ANIMATION 86

▲The courses and all their tourist attractions are superb, and fairly clipping-free.
▼Your bike seems curiously static.

MUSIC 70

▼This is yet another game saddled with endless 'widdly widdly' pseudo heavy metal guitar solos. Horrible.

EFFECTS 74

▼The bike engine does sound a bit like a fly caught in a bottle.

PLAYABILITY 78

▲Generally hampered by the over-eager leaning motion of your bike, but otherwise fairly satisfying and even exhilarating in places.

LASTABILITY 80

▲The 'secret' course and bike provide some incentive to complete this.
▼The variety is mainly visual, and the control remains untrue.

OVERALL

Corners have been cut, and what could have been a brilliant game is sadly compromised.

79

LONG AND WINDING ROADS

There are three principal courses to traverse, offering you the chance to sample the visual delights of everything from mid-European architecture to the sleek lines of an American concrete and glass jungle. If you do well enough, you get the chance to tackle three more 'secret' versions of the original courses which are expanded and augmented for added difficulty.



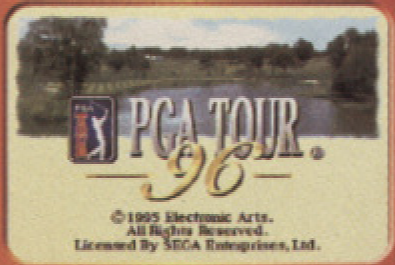
Albatross Cliff Reef presents a breezy Mediterranean landscape. The view is complemented by some giant Easter Island-style head statues which stare impassively at you from the roadside.



The Great Crimson Wall course is perhaps the most impressive, with Disneyland spires and billowing flags to admire as you skid around corners. On your final lap, balloons are launched skyward.



New Dwells sees you negotiate the tight city streets of a concrete metropolis. Zoom under the flyovers and past the skyscrapers, admiring the huge red suspension bridge on the way.



BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS

RELEASE: DECEMBER

PRICE: £44.99

GAME TYPE: SPORTS

1-4 PLAYERS

16 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

CONTINUES: SAVE GAME

SKILL LEVELS: 3

RESPONSIVENESS: SMOOTH

ORIGIN

A completely new game engine for the now classic PGA Golf series.

GAME AIM

Hit little balls with little sticks, and aim for little holes.

BEAT THIS

7 under for round 1

PGA TO



Golf must be one of the most frustrating, yet addictive, pastimes. Everybody must have brandished a slim tube of metal in the hope of knocking a small ball into holes. Levels of skill range from the incompetently bad, like those who whack great chunks of divot (technical term) all over the fairways leaving huge craters in the lush green grass, to the smarmy, 'I drive a Jag' players who churn up the aforementioned divots just because they're being flash. However, if plus fours and lurid jumpers are not your thing, EA have released a new addition to the PGA family for all you armchair golfers.

The problem with the previous 'upgrades' is that they were over-reliant on simply providing new courses for their variation. This time, EA have thrown all the old aspects out of the window and revamped the entire thing. The graphics are now in complete 3-D with photo-realistic golfers added for good measure. As always, there is a new course to hack and slash your way around – in this case it's Spyglass Hill. But because of the complexity of the graphics, there is only enough room for that and two other courses: Sawgrass, which is the old daddy having appeared in most of the other titles, and River Highlands, which made its debut in PGA 3.



FORE! GOD'S SAKE

The swing meter has now undergone a change of image. Instead of the usual bar along the bottom, it comes in the form of an arc, surrounding the golfer's body. Three button presses must be made in order to take a shot. One to start, one to stop the backswing and the final one to halt the downstroke. If, for some reason, you miss out one of the presses, then your golfer will duff his shot and the ball will travel approximately 3 yards. For those who think that's quite far, just remember, the average sneeze blasts snot particles over 25 feet!



COMMENT



STEVE

At last! An EA sequel that isn't completely the same as the original(s). PGA Golf is a totally new game and what a corker it is. Even though the basic stuff is all there, it's all presented in a new manner, and means that you are playing a virtually new game. The swing meter needed a change and this time it's a lot harder to get a perfect shot, meaning hours of practice are needed. Also the shots are affected by the type of lie you have. If you are on an upslope, the shot will veer left regardless. It's little details like that that make these PGA games what they are. The fact that there are only three courses is a bit of a bummer for 1 player modes, but overall it's a much needed new format. In my view, it works really well.

GIMMIE THAT!

A new and novel feature to crop up in this is the ability to 'Gimmie.' Confused? Let me explain, my child. If you end up with a fantastic shot that ends up so close it's unmissable, or you roll up a putt inches away, an option called 'gimmie' appears enabling you to pick up the ball without putting. This adds one to your score and saves time and hassle. Unfortunately it's only available on the practise rounds. Never mind.





COMMENT



MARCUS

What a peach of a game. I defy anyone with even the deepest loathing of golf not to get even mildly addicted to this detailed and user-friendly simulation.

What really appeals to me is the refreshing '3-D' effect and the superb responsiveness of the 'swingometer'. Timing your swings requires split second control and anything less than perfect would have scuppered the whole game. On the down side, the cartridge can't seem to keep up with all the visual garnishing EA have added, and it can be very slow in loading holes up sometimes. But what's golf if it's not a leisurely pursuit?





SKINNY DIPPING

The range of game styles to try your hand at is broader than the entrants for a whale lookalike contest. Obviously you can play a tournament on any of the courses, but you can also play an 18 or 9 hole practise round, or Match Play in which the best score wins the hole, and whoever has claimed the most holes at the end of the round wins. The EA Shoot Out consists of four players, human or computer, and the person with the highest score at the end of the hole is eliminated. There is the driving range, practise putting green and 'play a single hole'.options, but the best for multi-player frivolity is the skins option. Each hole has a certain amount of money on it, and the lowest score wins the cash. If the hole is tied, it's carried over and added to the next hole until someone wins.



ALL BALLS REALLY

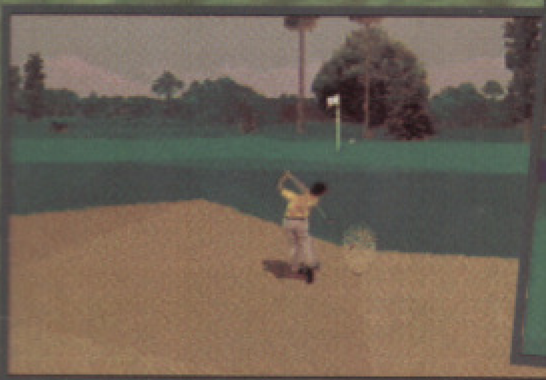
The game can incorporate up to four human players, but if you feel you need a bit of a personality change, there are 10 American PGA Tour pros for you to play as or play against. Each one has their own swing and strengths, and it is advisable to play to these. All the best Yanks (if there is such a thing) are here, meaning you can play as a pro and even look like one. Triffic.













GRAPHICS 92

▲The new 3-D landscapes and presentation screens work well.

▼But it is quite slow loading after each shot.

ANIMATION 90

▲The players are pretty much photo-realistic, you know.

MUSIC 86

▲Typical crappy American music between each hole and presentation screens.

EFFECTS 85

▲Chirpy birds and crowd claps are still good.

▼But there's no speech!

PLAYABILITY 91

▲A whole new game style to get used to.

▼May dissuade some people used to the old winning formula.

LASTABILITY 90

▲Although it's tough to master the new swing bar, you won't want to stop trying.

▼There are only three courses.

OVERALL

The rewrite was long overdue, but well worth the wait. Even the old PGA fans will find a new lease of gameplay.

90

MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS THE MOVIE

RELEASE:	OUT NOW
PLAYERS:	1-2
BY:	SEGA
MEG:	16
PRICE:	£39.99
GAME TYPE:	BEAT 'EM UP

Category	Score	Comment
GRAPHICS	44	Lack any imagination or innovation.
EFFECTS	40	All the cries are the same, as are punch sounds.
ANIMATION	43	Don't be silly.
PLAYABILITY	41	Non-existent. Even fans will find it rubbish
MUSIC	44	OK if you're deaf.
LASTABILITY	42	Loads of continues + a couple of levels = None.
OVERALL	42	This is not worthy off anyone's attention. Even fans will be severely disappointed.

Trying to write something interesting and different about Power Rangers is like trying to tell Marcus that Quentin Tarantino is a prat, and Claire that Hamley the teddy isn't a real bear. It's impossible. The Lycra-clad, skin-tight outfits and rubber-costumed monsters fighting in someone's local park have sent the children of today crazy. The merchandising ploy to accompany this is an even greater farce, with all manner of lunch boxes and pyjamas now available to own. The next license in the Christmas gift list is this scrolling Megadrive beat 'em up.



Moving on a level from the dire Game Gear version, this game is a Streets of Rage-style scrap, testing the Megadrive's capabilities to the limits. You can control any of the Rangers, and when the need arises the Megazord and Falconzord fight against other boss characters. Six stages make up the bulk of the game, with some other sub-levels thrown in. All in all, this sideways-scrolling punchfest adds up to an awesome, joypad-shaking experience. Or something.



THORPE PARK RANGER

Each Ranger has a set of of button and D-pad moves that, when executed, give a (sort of) special move. These movements are exactly the same for every character, meaning that all the moves are the same. But they vary in look as some of the Rangers have swords and lances to 'spice' things up a bit.



COMMENT



MARCUS

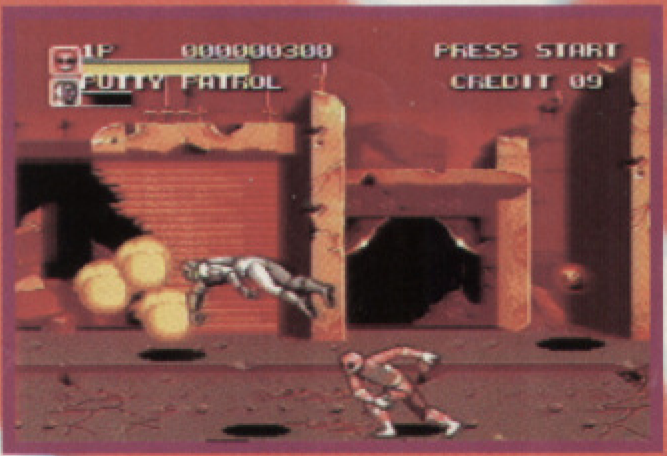
Oh my giddy aunt, what do we have here? This handles like a donkey and looks like a throwback to the dark days of the first Streetfighter. There are few more cynical practises in the gaming world than trotting out second-rate product cloaked by a popular license, and Power Rangers is a prime example. This will inevitably be picked up by a load of Power Rangers fans regardless of review scores, but even they are going to have to be pretty fanatical to get anything out of it. Together with the similarly appalling Street Fighter: The Movie, it seems both the Saturn and the Megadrive are currently saddled with a pair of tie-in turkeys.

COMMENT



STEVE

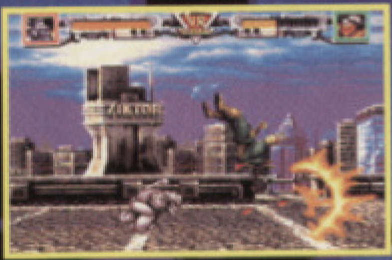
I thought the Game Gear version of this was bad, but this! This takes the biscuit, the jar and the cupboard. It's such a worthless title that it doesn't even warrant shelf space. The graphics are bog standard, Master System stuff, and are really dull. The Rangers have a couple of moves between them and that's it. The levels lack any creativity, and are no fun to play. And to top it all off, there are two enemies to beat up apart from the boss characters and even then they keep coming back later in the game. In short I wouldn't wish this game on even my worst enemy. Stay away.





Go Go Go! The Rangers work out in preparation for the next Sega Poor cover.

VR TROOPERS







The kiddies' TV shows are now at an all-time low. Whoever thought that the Power Rangers was a good idea deserves to be shot, and then the pillock who came up with this warrants nothing less than decapitation and a severe kicking. GMTV is a daft enough programme already without crappy rubber-costumed monsters beating up sad actors. Now all you early risers can play the game as well as watch teh programme. Awesome.

As you would expect, the creative genius' behind VR Troopers could think of nothing better to program than a one-on-one beat 'em up. Whilst they were on the crest of a creative brainwave, they decided to throw in a story mode as well, bringing the number of fresh and new ideas up to none. This then lead to the versus mode and the fresh, exciting game ideas finally ran dry. Each character has three special moves that are executed by a familiar series of button presses, but should you own a six button pad, the need for D-pad moves flows down the drain, as all the moves can be done using X, Y and Z. So we are left with the most brilliant beat 'em up of the year. Maybe...

RELEASE: DECEMBER	MEG: 16
PLAYERS: 1-2	PRICE: TBA
BY: SEGA	GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

GRAPHICS 48 — Some good variety but not great.

EFFECTS 43 — No good punch sounds, or anything for that matter.

ANIMATION 40 — Each character has about two frames.

PLAYABILITY 40 — So dull and boring. No excitement whatsoever.

MUSIC 52 — Annoying. Weak. Poor.

LASTABILITY 45 — You won't want to play this twice.

OVERALL 45 — **An unbelievably poor title with absolutely no redeeming features.**

COMMENT

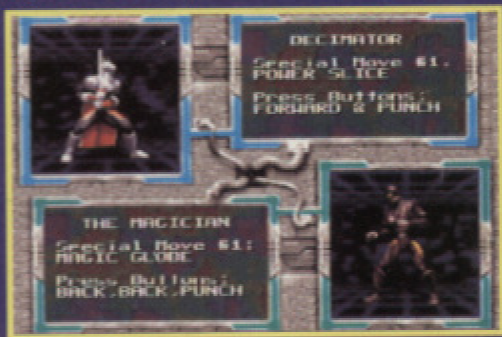


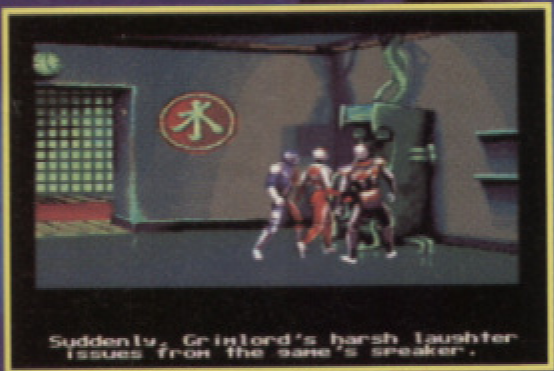
This astonishingly bland punch marathon is so uneventful that it leaves you plenty of time to ponder how much beat 'em ups have progressed since this was conceived. If you must buy this, do your pondering over the pretty psychadelic intro backgrounds. They're more fun than the game.

MARCUS

TELL US A STORY

If you choose to fight in the story mode then only the three VR Troopers are selectable. You get to choose each of them before every fight, enabling a bit of variety in the character department. But if the versus mode is chosen, then all of the characters from the game are open for battle, complete with all the special moves.











COMMENT



It must have been my lucky day when this and Power Rangers landed in the office. I thought "I know, I'll ignore Virtua Cop, VF 2 and Sega Rally and play VR Troopers instead." What a waste of time this is! Dire gameplay, no fun at all and no lastability coupled with poor graphics and dodgy sound make this a sure fire flop. I cannot see why any sane person would buy this instead of MK3, and even fans will be severely disappointed. Take it away and don't bring it back.

STEVE

MS. PAC-MAN

A long time ago, in an arcade far far away, there were no games consoles and only a handful of games. And they were all pretty good. One of the neglected gems from the dark days of gaming is Pac-Man. It's easy to forget (if you're old enough to have remembered in the first place) the scale of the Pac-Man phenomenon – the little yellow guy enjoyed fifteen minutes of stardom in everything from endless rip-off 'sequels' to a range of player's guides which appeared in every self-respecting bookshop and school library.

But all that was many years ago. While our little round buddy has been munching his way around virtual heaven, the world has moved on. Retro freaks are in for a treat, however, with Time-Warner's Megadrive version of Namco's original Pac-Man sequel – Ms Pac-Man. For the benefit of our younger readers, this is the drill: manoeuvre a munching yellow thing around a maze, gobbling every available dot. Avoid close contact with the patrolling ghosties. There's a little bit more to it, but that's essentially it.



To fully relive the early Eighties gaming experience we recommend you plug in the Soda Stream, squeeze into a pink rah-rah skirt and play Ms Pac-Man while listening to Spandau Ballet. On an Amstrad vertical record deck.

RELEASE: ....OUT NOW
PLAYERS:.....................1-2
BY: ....TIME-WARNER

MEG:....................................4
PRICE:.........................£19.99
GAME TYPE:...........PUZZLE

GRAPHICS 60
A faithful recreation of the classic coin-op.

EFFECTS 55
Sometimes everything flashes and there's a gloopy noise.

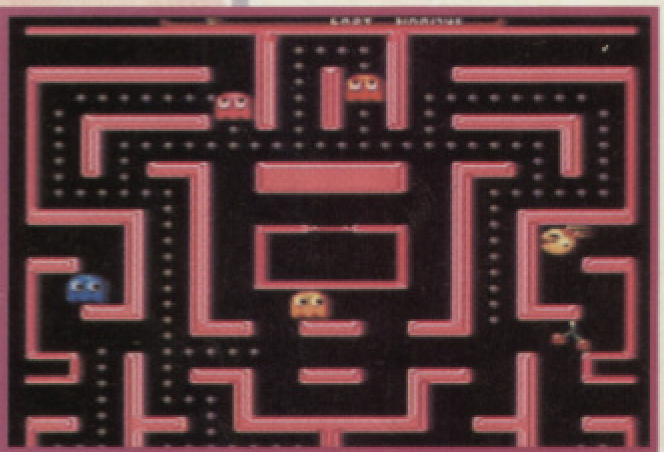
ANIMATION 57
Well, there's this little munching fella and, erm...

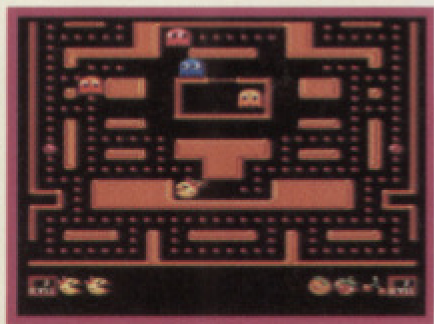
PLAYABILITY 62
The two player option is especially good, but...

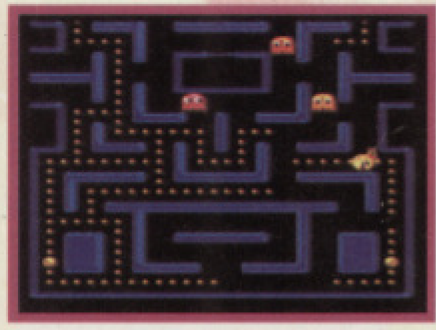
MUSIC 62
The same plinky plonky tunes we grew to love all those years ago.

LASTABILITY 68
...the 'not quite right' feel of this is an obstacle.

OVERALL 64
You can get used to the controls, but it's still a compromise.







COMMENT



STEVE

Do you realise that I would have been about 5 when Pac Man made his arcade debut? If this had been released about that time, it might have caused a bit of a stir, but now it just looks dated. I'd imagine most people interested in this type of game will have moved on to slightly better games like Zoop(?!). Don't get me wrong, if you want an arcade perfect conversion in the comfort of your own home, I can guarantee that this will fit the bill to a tee. The most addictive part is the faithful wakka wakka, 'only one more pill to get' gameplay that keeps you munching, but I just don't think there is a market for this any more.

COMMENT



MARCUS

I'm pretty sure my memory isn't deceiving me – this isn't as much fun as it was all those years ago. Ms Pac-Man looks like a faithful recreation of the classic coin-op, and certainly features the right tunes, but it fails to come together in one vital area. The problem with this version of Ms Pac-Man is that it doesn't feel right – playing this game on a joypad is an unfamiliar experience anyway, but when coupled with the decidedly sticky controls it really becomes quite a frustrating experience. This game is a classic which deserves to be in everybody's collection, but it seems that capturing its relatively simple charm has proved too difficult.



On later levels, difficulty is increased when sections of the maze disappear.

EAT IT AND SMILE

Ms Pac-Man presents an option frenzy, allowing you to tailor your game to your precise needs. There is a two player option, allowing Mr and Ms Pac-Man to either alternate, play with each other (oo er) or play competitively. The seven levels can be played on 'arcade', 'strange', 'big' or 'mini' settings, 'mini' being the only one that doesn't scroll from top to bottom. If you want to speed up the rather sedate pace, you can select 'Pac Booster', which adds rather fetching whizz lines to your hero's profile.

PAC-PANIC

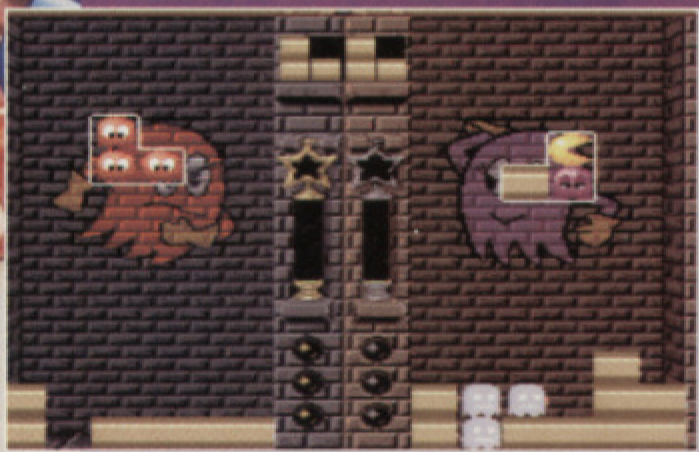
The spherical superstar bounces back in phase two of the Pac comeback tour. Actually, Pac-Panic (originated for the Megadrive by Philips, of all people) only pinches the character for a novel Tetris clone that tugs a forelock in the direction of the early Eighties arcade fave.
In an astonishingly inventive scenario, Pac-Panic sees blocks tumble out of the sky and land in a heap in a narrow well. It's up to you to manoeuvre the blocks while they're falling, in order to get them to form as solid a heap as possible on the ground – complete 'lines' of blocks are eliminated, making your task to keep the screen as clear as possible a bit easier. In the bit that is actually fairly inventive, Pac ghosts fall alongside, or instead of, the blocks. As well as manoeuvring the blocks, your task is to manoeuvre the tumbling ghosts so they form clear 'lines' within the blocks – this enables the occasional tumbling Pac-Man to gobble them up.







The Pac ghosts descend, Tribble-like, to fill every nook and cranny of Tetris land.



RELEASE: ....OUT NOW	MEG:................................ 8
PLAYERS:.....................1-2	PRICE:..................... £19.99
BY: ....PHILIPS	GAME TYPE:........ PUZZLE

GRAPHICS 76 Gratifyingly basic and clutter-free.	**EFFECTS 70** Sparse, simple and only when required.
ANIMATION 73 Fairly cute when the 'ghost fairy' descends to dissolve the spooks.	**PLAYABILITY 81** If you like Tetris, you'll definitely approve of the gameplay here.
MUSIC 75 An authentic sounding 'Can-Can', amongst other tunes.	**LASTABILITY 87** A naturally addictive mix of two addictive games.

OVERALL 82
A neat twist on two classic puzzle games. Basic, but well worth a look.

COMMENT



MARCUS

Although this has obviously got far more to do with Tetris than Pac-Man, the hungry honcho makes an ideal addition to spin a twist on an old fave. And even though this remixed Tetris isn't an entirely original concept, the addition of the ghost gobbler should make it attractive to kids, or nostalgia freaks like me. Highlights include the two player head-to-head, where you can off load a bunch of your ghosts onto your struggling opponent if you're clever. This is an attractively priced and well-constructed puzzler likely to keep you amused for quite a while.

PUZZLE-TASTIC

In Puzzle mode, the blocks and ghosts fall in preset and predictable patterns – the challenge arising from the fact that you only have a limited number of Pacs with which to gobble them up. You need to be extra careful about where the ghosts fall. In standard and versus modes, help is at hand in times of tower-building torment by the arrival of 'ghost fairy'. If you've amassed enough points (an indicator in the middle of the screen tells you how close you are) a fairy lands on your block sculpture, sprinkling magic dust which dissolves the spooks.



The spook fairy sprinkles her disappearing dust.



COMMENT



STEVE

The Pac returns. Again. But to add a little spice to the equation, this time it's like Tetris. The main part of the gameplay here is fine, but despite the price, I don't think many people are going to bother with this. The graphics aren't brilliant, and are far too big. If they were smaller and more room was left for a wider area of play then it would have improved things. It's also a bit too slow to start with, although it does quicken up. OK for the price, but hardly jaw-dropping stuff.

AUSTRALIAN RUGBY LEAGUE

RELEASE: ....DECEMBER
PLAYERS:......................1-4
BY: ....EA

MEG:..................................16
PRICE:.........................£44.99
GAME TYPE:.........SPORTS

GRAPHICS 80
Quite well presented, but nothing new.

EFFECTS 85
Good kicking noises and winces from the players.

ANIMATION 83
Players are a little jerky, but generally good.

PLAYABILITY 81
Tough to master, but worth persevering with.

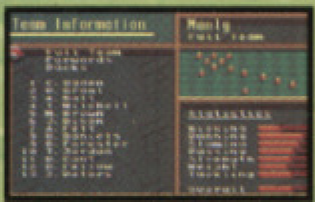
MUSIC 79
Not all that important for a game like this. OK for the fussy.

LASTABILITY 82
Loads of different tournaments to play in.

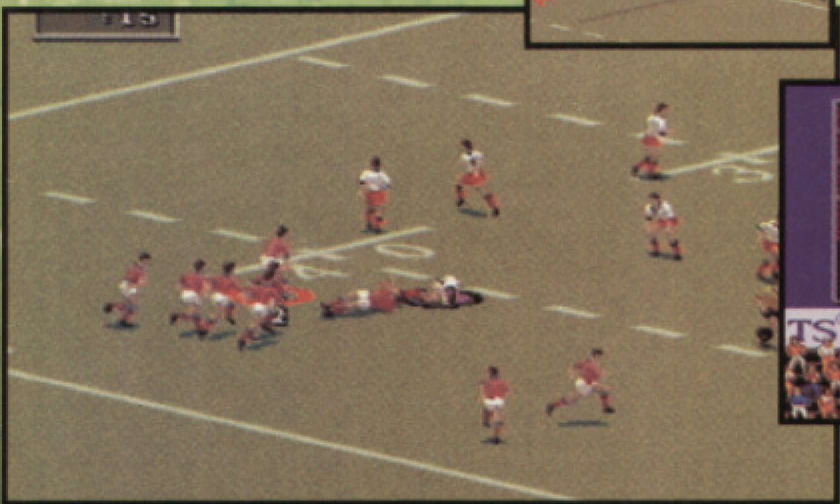
OVERALL 81
The other half of rugby has been successfully ported over to console by the EA team.

Not content with providing you 'orrible lot with the latest Fifa, those nice people at EA have gone and made another upgrade, but this time to their first rugby game, Rugby World Cup. However, for this latest creation they've gone and based it around the Australian version of our Rugby League, so all the players are wearing hats with corks on, the cheerleaders are Kangaroos, and the National Anthems are sung by Rolf Harris and his didgeridoo choir.

Don't be fooled – this isn't a version of Aussie (no) rules football, the poor man's rugby. This is the rugby that Will Carling doesn't play – the one where you roll the ball between your legs once you have been tackled. The game is still similar to the original in terms of the viewpoint and the player animations, but obviously the teams and rules are all different. Play modes incorporate the standard friendly games and also national cups and inter-state championships. Although the teams may seem fairly alien to most of you, all the players are in fact called Bruce and have girlfriends called Sheila. Allegedly.





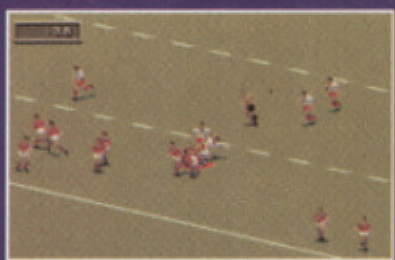


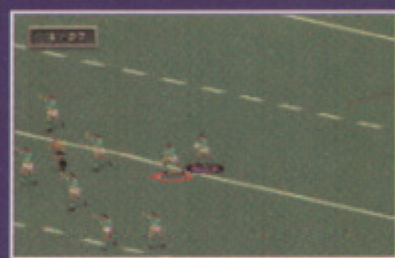


Duncan Goodhew in big mouth rugby ball shock!

TIE ME KANGAROO DOWN SPORT

The 'Origin' option is a head to head of the states from down under. Apparently, it's regarded with high aplomb when played, so you can expect to see lots of patriotic bickering and celebration when 'your half' wins. Basically it's the North versus South, Left versus Right, as the cream of the crop from the New South Wales rugby league take on the best of Queensland's top division in a three match series of gruelling encounters. Put another shrimp on the barbee, that's what I say.





COMMENT



MARCUS

Rugby wouldn't be my choice for the console treatment (very few sports would) but Electronic Arts have got away with the impossible and made this halfway playable. It's smooth, well animated, visually detailed and sensibly constructed. Even little details like the bobbing heads of chattering crowd members are presented, giving the game a very polished appearance. On the downside, it can get a little frustrating when passes don't work, as Steve said, but practice should make perfect as far as the controls are concerned. Overall, this is isn't as inhospitable as it could have been, and is well worth a look if you're after something different.

COMMENT



STEVE

When it comes to rugby, I find League to be more exciting then Union, and the same can be said for this. I didn't particularly like the first EA rugger games but this is a little better. For a start the ball hardly ever goes out of play, as after every five tackles you lose possession. The computer does try tp kick to touch, but often fails. This, and a considerate ref, keeps the game flowing. It is, however, really difficult to master the passing controls, which means you are always going too far backwards and getting tackled, losing precious ground. But overall, it is quite satisfying to see a 5 player passing move come off for a try, so this is likely to appeal to rugby fans.


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CASIO

The last twelve months have seen software scaling new dizzy heights and, sadly, plumming new depths. In case any of you are still pondering what to invest in, or what to avoid, we've compiled this handy guide to the best and worst of 1995. For once we thought we'd let everyone have a say, even Claire and Lucy, so if some of these games' positions don't quite tally with their review scores bear in mind that these are the titles we all jointly decided to include. And remember that girls don't always think like normal people.

THE TOP TEN OF 1995



1. VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 (SATURN)

We know this isn't out just yet, but we got to review it so it's included. This was a unanimous fave amongst all of us, everyone agreeing it represents a genuine advance in gaming. The finest console game in existence, regardless of format or genre.

2. X-MEN:CHILDREN OF THE ATOM (SATURN)



The number 2 slot goes to another beat 'em up – a 2-D one. Some may say that this format is dated, but this was nevertheless realised with such integrity, humour and polish that it was difficult to resist.

3. EARTHWORM JIM 2 (MEGADRIVE)

The year's outstanding Megadrive title, this slick and funny platformer proved that being limited in bit size needn't limit gameplay. A particular favourite with Gus, in our opinion this is an essential purchase.

4. VIRTUA COP (SATURN)

Another of Sega's big guns that appeared just in time for Christmas. Never before has this type of shoot 'em up appeared on a home system with such sophisticated graphics or engrossing gameplay. Good with a joypad, superb with a gun.



5. BAKU BAKU (SATURN)

A big favourite with the ladies, this cutesy munchfest won everyone's hearts with its cheeky chomping chappies. Probably the least sophisticated, least pretentious and least offensive title we saw all year. And all the more refreshing for it.

6. FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2 (SATURN)

The appeal of this helicopter gunship spree was lost on Marcus, but the rest of the team whiled away many hours hovering over interesting terrain. And dropping bombs all over it.

7. ARENA (GAME GEAR)

This isometric title was the best of an above-average crop that appeared on the hand-held console during 1995. Sega told us to be prepared for something special and they weren't wrong – loads of levels, loads of puzzles, loads of weapons, loads of game.



8. VECTORMAN (MEGADRIVE)

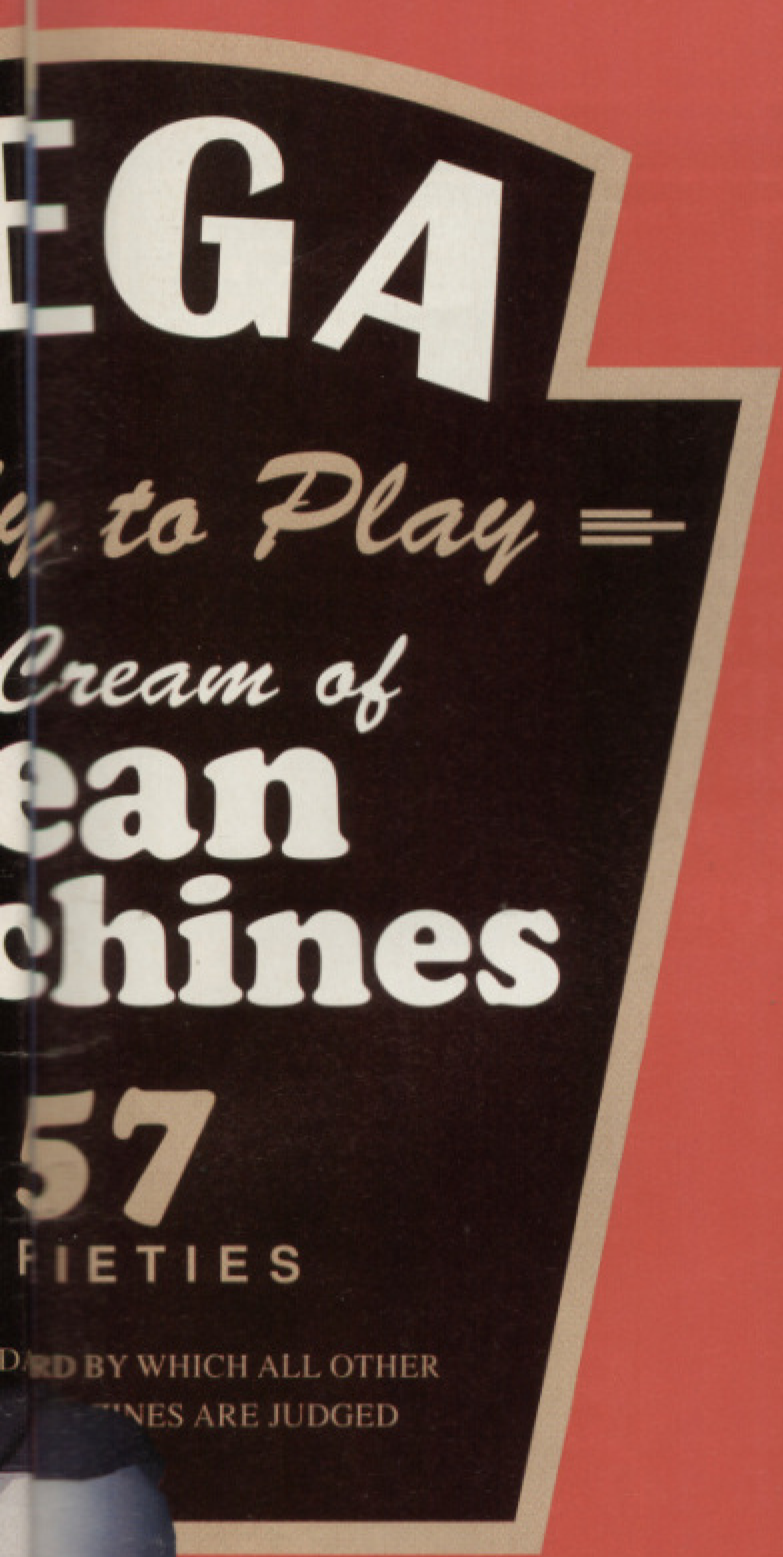
A superb platform shoot 'em up that succeeded in breathing new life into a tired genre. The breathtaking quality of the smooth animation and detailed graphics were rivalled only by Jim 2.

9. COOL SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD (MEGADRIVE)

This quantum leap from the original Cool Spot retained all its successor's charm and playability while adding a successful isometric viewpoint and some fiendish puzzles into the mix. The 32X version was even more bonkers, with some excellent bosses.

10. STORY OF THOR (MEGADRIVE)

The Megadrive RPG scene was dominated by Shining Force until this came along. Not only an RPG but an action adventure as well, this offers the best in strategy gaming with excellent visuals to match.



WHO'S IN THE BIN?

We decided to be charitable in choosing our least favourite games of the year so, in an attempt to preserve what relationships we still have with the software houses concerned, we've restricted our crap list to five. No prizes for guessing which game stands alone at the foot of the heap...

1. RISE OF THE ROBOTS (MEGADRIVE)

OK, it looks quite pretty but anyone seduced by this game's graphics will have been all the more disappointed by this narrow and cumbersome travesty. This sucked donkeys and certainly played like one.

2. VR TROOPERS (MEGADRIVE)

We thought the TV show was sad enough, but then this came along. Terrible graphics, zero playability and no reason whatsoever to even consider buying it. The year's most atrocious license cash-in.



Cosmic Garbage – condemned to bargain bin hell. Avoid at all costs.

3. COSMIC CARNAGE (32X)

This beat 'em up was intended to showcase the scaling powers of the 32X. In the event, Lego should have attempted to sponsor it, as it took the art of blocky graphics beyond even Picasso in his Cubist period.

4. UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS (MEGADRIVE)

The programmers had some sense of humour coming up with this title, which was indeed a rough and entirely unnecessary attempt at American football. It was also Accolade's last UK title, bless 'em.

5. THE ADVENTURES OF BATMAN AND ROBIN (MEGA CD)

The gaming equivalent of a wet weekend on the M25. The only difference being that this deadly dull driving 'game' was less eventful. This mind-numbing Sunday spin was punctuated only by a couple of entertaining bosses and a bit at the end where you take to the air. But who will have stayed awake to find out?

CLOSE, BUT NO CIGAR

The following games only narrowly missed our top ten: Sega Rally ("Boring" – Lucy), Daytona USA ("Dated" – Marcus) and Bug! ("Repetitive" – Claire).

THE WISH LIST

In no particular order, these are the titles we're most looking forward to in 1996. It looks like the only surprise the Megadrive might have in store at the moment is the incredible Toy Story, but on the Saturn we're keeping our fingers crossed for...

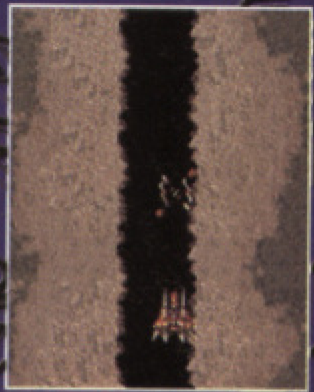
VAMPIRE HUNTER: DARKSTALKER'S REVENGE
STORY OF THOR
GUARDIAN HEROES
VIRTUA COP 2
FIGHTING VIPERS
MANX TT
MARVEL SUPER-HEROES
TOMB RAIDER
and a new SONIC title perhaps?



SEGA SATURN OUT NOW

Out Now is fast becoming a phenomenon. A Black Hole where chaos reigns. A wild place where even Sega's long rod of magazine discipline cannot be inserted; the land of the wild and the free. Translate that as the pages where praise is lavished and slaggings are given, just at that crucial point when the game is actually staring you in the face, on the shelf and begging you to buy. But on the bright side, this month's collection are actually all rather good...

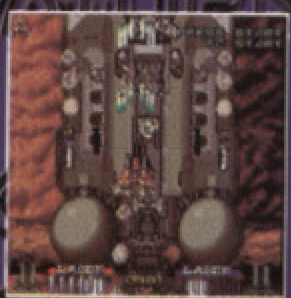
GALACTIC ATTACK
ACCLAIM
£44.99
1-2 PLAYERS
SHOOT 'EM UP



OUT NOW

This is Layer Section, a Taito import of some months ago, repackaged with a rather hamfisted new title for the European market. We feel the Saturn is suffering from a distinct lack of conventional shooter action at the moment, and in that respect Layer Section fills a significant niche. It's much in the style of arcade games like Raiden, with utterly *frenetic blasting* but basic controls and gameplay. Occasionally the background graphics impress, but not nearly as much as many other more recent Saturn games. This title is most seriously limited by its lack of variety in weapons and eight levels. Until some of the other Japanese scrolling shooters make *it* here, this may be your only option.





OVERALL 75

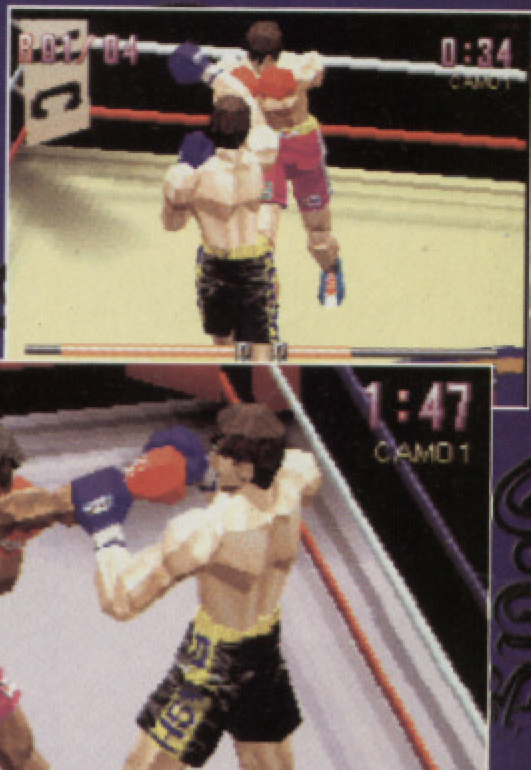
It's a bit of grin for a while, but don't expect anything radical.

VICTORY BOXING
JVC
£44.99
1-2 PLAYER
SPORTS



OUT NOW

In some respects, Victory Boxing performs better the more you play, in others worse. What is not in dispute is its *position* as the best Saturn boxing sim. Well, it *is the only one.* But that doesn't detract from the achievement of simply making boxing entertaining, as it is all *to often leads* to leaden, boring gameplay. Victory Boxing, in contrast, is *surprisingly* light on its feet, and its angular polygon-styled boxers work well. The comprehensive boxer-building features add depth, and JVC have exploited this with some excellent hidden features (see this month's *feature*). The downside is the ease of completing the one-player game (despite it being a slog). If you want two-player action, with more realism than Virtua Fighting or Golden Axeing, then go ahead.





OVERALL 87

Few boxing games have ever hit the mark quite like this. Best for two human players.

FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2
CORE
£44.99
1 PLAYER
SHOOT 'EM UP



OUT NOW

Core's timing with this top-rank helicopter gunfest couldn't have been better. In our view, Christmas games have to be a different beast from other good titles. Put it into this perspective: you've *bought* a Saturn, so you probably won't have much cash to buy a lot of games. You want something that will keep you playing over the hols. Thunderhawk 2 is the logical choice.
Initially, it will give you an idea of just *how* powerful the Saturn is, with its spectacular explosive graphics *and* epic landscapes. Then it's one hell of a challenge that faces you across 27 missions crammed with enemy hardware. If it has kept us satisfied over the last month, it's bound to occupy you too. Only the scenery clipping leaves any lasting sense of disappointment, as some of the mountains do pop into view a tad awkwardly. However, if you rate your games in terms of cold, hard playability, then Core's first Saturn work is outstanding.







OVERALL 95

Concentrated action, and only on the Saturn in 1995. This is what we want.

GOLDEN AXE: THE DUEL
SEGA
£39.99
1-2 PLAYER
BEAT 'EM UP

OUT NOW



This rather smart beat 'em up has arrived on the back of some favourable reviews, and it's a deserving case for a UK release. Sega take the traditional one-on-one fighting style that Capcom have made their own and made a reasonable fist of it (geddit?). The characters are from the old Megadrive/coin-op Golden Axe series, but it's only crusties who will remember them now.
The game is made worthy by its speed, solid graphics and some amazing special moves which are worth practising (see guide this very issue). The only gilt-removing factor is Acclaim's forthcoming, and undeniably superior, X-Men, but you'll have another month to wait for that. Availability at least should make Golden Axe desirable.







OVERALL 84

It's solid, like Pedigree Chum. A fighting game of the old school, but elegantly made.

MEAN YOB

Greetings Yoblings, and welcome to the planet Yobula. Since I seized power, I have installed Claire and Lucy as my servants, Gus as the jester, Marcus as the messenger and Steve as my chamber maid. All have settled into their respective jobs well, apart from Steve who we caught stealing Yobcumbers several times. Presented for your perusal is another selection of hyperspace transmissions from my intergalactic neighbours. If you have any requests for housing grants or loans for the planet Yobula council to inspect and reject, do not hesitate to send them to: PLANET YOBULA, YOB'S MAILBAG, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.



'A mecha-armoured Mean Yob, a Cyber-Sonic and a few Manga type background folk.' Brilliant!

QUARK

Dear Yob,
In issue 38 I could not believe the amount of stupid letters you printed. It seems that half your readers are sarcastic buggers like Jamie Cunningham. What a tosser. He based his whole letter on a stupid leaflet about a "potential Saturn killer" i.e. (the not quite as good as the Saturn) Playstation. WHO gives a toss. Then he went on to say that you did it for the money, and he says that he's a beloved fan of MEAN MACHINES SEGA. I'd hate to think of what he would say to a piece of crap like Sega Power. Anyway that's not the only annoying letter, but if I had talked about all of them I'd have used up a small rain forest which could have been used for other things like making your brilliant mag. Please print this or I will be forced to put you on my hit list which is growing every time I read your letters page.
I.P. Freely, Essex.

YOB:I.P. Freely – haven't you got a sister called Rusty Bedsprings? My letters page is a chance for readers to voice their opinion, albeit good or bad, and yours falls into the latter category of tosh. The bloke in question had a problem, he writes in, and then I slaughter him for it. Who cares what they have to say, as long as they say it? I just hope that your pants are drying from the type of urine leakage that you seem to have adopted as a name.



"Oh no! Someone's nicked my arms!" wails Rayman.

ZYGON

Dear Yob,
In November's mag, I spotted a mistake in the Mortal Kombat 3 poster. I've spotted Nightwolf fighting Raiden when it says that five people have returned from Mortal Kombat 2, namely Shang Tsung, Jax, Liu Kang, Sub Zero, and Kung Lao, and two more from Mortal 1, Sonya and Kano, but no Raiden. Is he really in it?
Andrew Leese,
No fixed abode

YOB:If you actually played the game instead of trying to be a smart arse clever gimp, you might actually realise that that is Nightwolf's friendship move. Just in case that was too much for you, here it is again. Put your middle fingers on button A, then put your little fingers on button B. Now wiggle the pad with remaining moving bits and if that doesn't work, well at least you tried.

TRACTATOR

Dear Yob,
As a hi-tech manufacturer I would have thought you could at least set a sensible question, or at least phrase the one you set correctly. I refer to "How many planets are there in the Solar System?" Do you mean "How many planets are there currently believed to be in our Solar System?" There are currently believed to be nine planets, possibly ten, so I would like to stress what a ridiculous competition question you have set.
Barry Nunn, Yarmouth

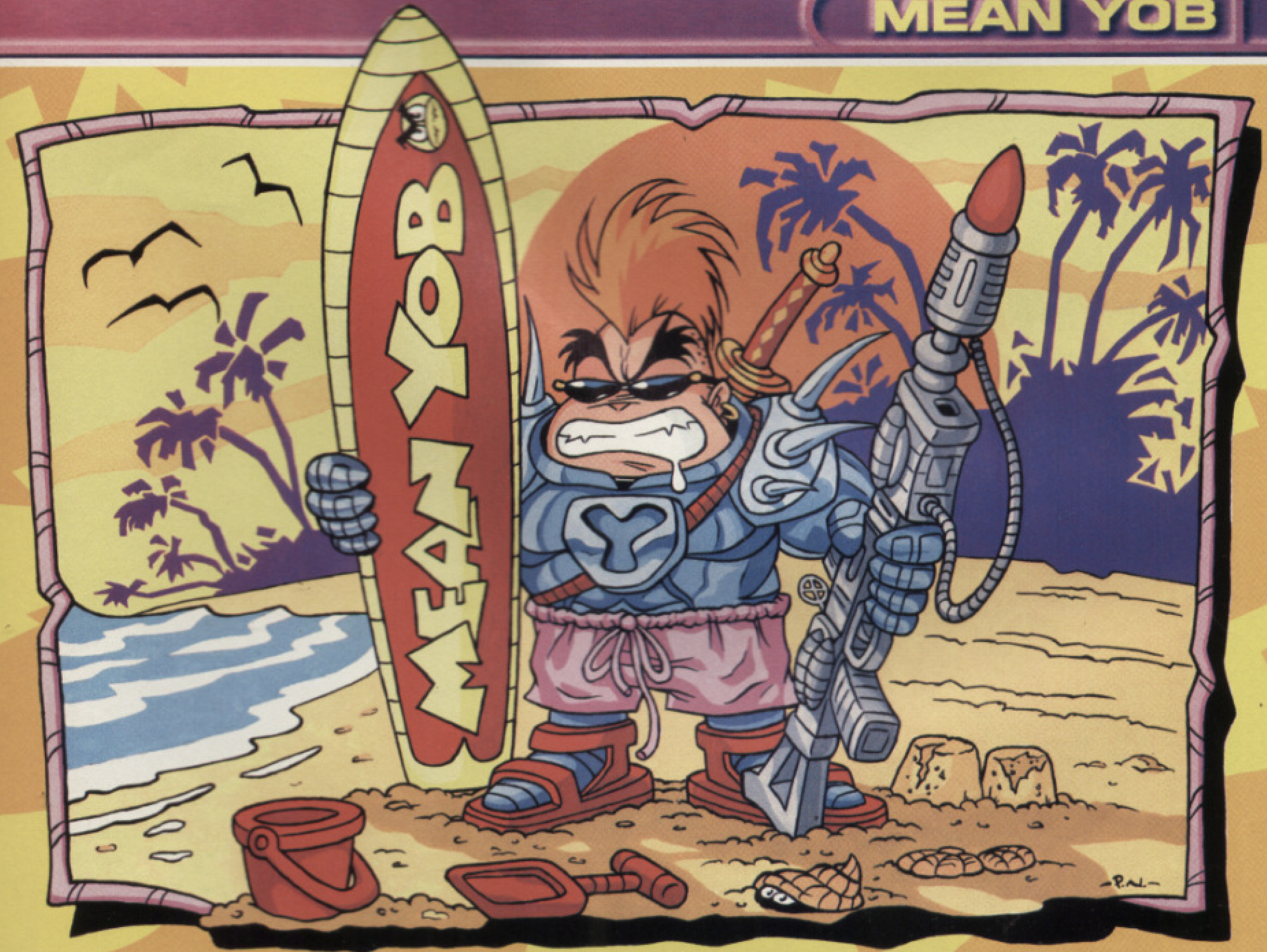
YOB:One would assume that one can do with this letter, what one does usually with paper de toilette. Shove it up your crack! Obviously the question was far too complicated for an amoeba like you to comprehend, so instead of entering, one thought one would write a poncey letter, underlining the fact that one is an imbecile.

DRACONIAN

Dear Yob,
Who do Sega Power think they are, taking the mickey out of you? My mate offered me a free December 95 issue of this lump of cheese and he insisted I had it. Before I let it meet the bin, I thought I would see what this 'Sado Pooer' had in it. I went through it, through the reviews of the games that are great, but made to look like they belong where the mag belongs with the rubbish attempt at humour! The tips page had 16 games in it, and nine of them were for people who need help. They need help if they



Hebereke frenzy, by Tim Burnett from The Toon. Cutie-Wutie-Snuggly-Wuggly! Aahh!



read that lump of cheddar. I read the letters page and what did I see? A reply for a letter saying "Nice to see that some people (like two) notice our efforts to create a decent (Pardon?) looking mag, not the shoddy, misspelled tat that passes for quality work from some other companies..." No doubt that they were talking about you and Sega Mag! I then saw a page I missed, and it said "Digital Pinball, 22%, Gus Swan's favourite game." What can I say? By the way, will you print this letter coz I always get MMS and Sega Mag every month.

Andrew Higgins, Dudley, West Midlands

YOB:Good to see a bit of rivalry eh? But what will their reader (singular) think when it sees the fantastic Rise of the Robots 2 scoop? I bet it was dead impressed. But we decided against basing a cover story on a completely uninspiring game, and we also turned down the fantastic Aaahh! Real Monsters for a cover story. Instead we decided to opt for a genuine Saturn world exclusive of Thunderhawk 2. No competition really is there?



Too right son! Corker!

NESTENE

To the gits at MMS,
After purchasing your latest issue I have to say that I am very unhappy with the Street Racer competition results (In case you're wondering, I did Mr. Madcap). I can take not winning but calling me sad was beyond a joke. My drawing was nowhere near as bad as the others there (Tommy for example). I can take a joke but that was bang out of order. I sent you a letter asking you if you were still selling Gunstar Heroes for £21, well you can stick that up your arse, coz I ain't giving you £2.50p let alone £21.

Reasons why I am not sad:
1. I have NEVER purchased or read a single issue of Sega Power
2. I don't like the Power Rangers
3. I like the VR Troopers even less
4. I (used to) buy your magazine every month for a year
5. I like the X-Men a lot
6. I don't own a 32X or a Mega CD
7. I don't like Bad Influence
8. I don't use the word 'pukka'
9. I don't fancy Claire

I don't want your crappy black and white T-shirt anyway – the game's utter crap. And why don't you grow up and stop doing Mean Yob like everyone else? He's just not funny anymore.

Donald Wokoma, Bow, London

YOB:Is it me, or is this guy more than slightly peeved? Now I will admit that his picture does look like it's in sad corner, but I can assure you that it's part of the 'close but no cigar' section. Check the border colour – the sad corner borders are purple, and the others are in light blue. Polite answer over. Why don't you just sod off? Your picture may have been alright, but because you got your dad to pose for it it doesn't count. So we pushed him into an articulated lorry, after which we scraped his entrails off the wheels. You should be receiving them in the post very soon.

MANDRIL

Dear Yob,
I've been looking through the past issues of MMS and I have found a strange recurrence of the same letter. It was first printed in issue 33 (July) under the heading 'Faces of Death' written by Savatage, London and was again printed in Issue 37 (November) under the heading 'Botty Scrapes' written by Steven Tage, Birmingham. Are people copying earlier letters and sending them in? Is this a huge conspiracy? One more thing – doesn't Lucy Hill look exactly like Angela off 'My So Called Life'?

Mr. Paranoia, and his wife Jim

YOB:The person responsible for selecting my letters has since been moved to Plastics and Rubber Weekly. They now test the bendability of second-hand elasticated jock straps worn by mistake spotters like you, after a particularly nasty bout of the runs.

Thankfully, that's all the pap I have to put up with for another month, enabling me to get on with ruling Yobula. Remember, the Force is always with you. Except Sega Force, which has long since been condemned to crap mag Hell.

Q&A

TAMA

Dear Gus
Please answer my questions about the next generation machines due to be released.
1. Does the Saturn play Megadrive games?
2. I currently wish to purchase a new machine, which would you recommend: Saturn or Ultra 64?
3. How much is the Ultra 64 likely to cost?
4. What games are likely to be released with the Ultra 64?
5. Is the 32X compatible with the Multi-Mega?
6. Will there be a Sensi Soccer game coming out on the Saturn or the Ultra 64?
7. What would you say was better, cartridge or a CD console? and for what reason(s)?
8. I am looking to sell a Multi-Mega, what do you think it's worth?
9. Will we see anything drastically new with the Ultra 64?
10. Will there be any new Zelda or other RPG's due for release on the Saturn or Ultra 64?
Richard Armstrong, Stockport
GUS:1. No it don't. 2. Saturn, as Ultra 64 is about six months off — at least! 3. Between £200 and £300 probably. 4. Nintendo ones, I expect. 5. Yes. 6. Can't see it for a long while. 7. This debate takes too long for this space. Maybe we'll do a feature on it. 8. £150 tops. 9. I guess so. 10. Dark Saviour on Saturn – read the interview.

TAILS

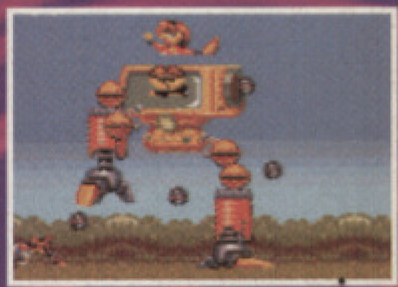
Dear Gus
Please could you answer my questions as this is the first time I have written to your magazine.



1. I own a Megadrive and I am thinking of getting Mortal Kombat 3 for my birthday. Will the arcade upgrade featuring the extra characters be coming out on the Megadrive and if so will it be a separate game or a plug-thru cartridge?
2. Please could you put these games in order of greatness: MK3, Indy Jones' Greatest Adventures, Batman & Robin, Batman Forever, Probotector, X-Men 2, Primal Rage, SOR 3 and Spot Goes To Hollywood.
3. In another magazine I read that Acclaim were planning to release an arcade WWF game. What happened to it? Will it be released on the Megadrive?
4. Will Street Fighter Legends or X-Men arcade games be coming out on the Megadrive?
P.S. Your mag is brill.
Lee Coupland, Hinckley, Leics.
GUS:1. No upgrade, I'm afraid. The Saturn is the only format currently up for the enhanced version. 2 Humm. MK3, Probotector, X-Men 2, Batman and Robin, Batman Forever, Primal Rage, Indy.
3. There's a Williams WWF game in the arcades. Wrestlemania is due for the Saturn.
4. Forget that straight away!

CLOCKWORK DOG

Dear Gus
I've purchased your mag since the very first issue, as in my own personal view, it's the best Sega mag in the WORLD! I've some questions I'd very much like you to answer. Please print the replies – I'll be looking forward to your next issue.
1. Will there be a 4th Strike by EA,



and if so when?
2. Where would I get hold of King Salmon for the Megadrive?
3. Which game would you recommend: Cannon Fodder or Syndicate?
4. Would you say that Virtua Racing is THE top racing game for the Megadrive?
Paul Burgess, Beaminster, Dorset.
GUS:1. Sometime there must be, but no official plans. 2. I would imagine the deepest

Q&A must have been the thing furthest from my mind as I sat looking out the twenty-third floor window of the Tokyo Hilton, but we all come down to earth with a bump eventually. No one can accuse me of being too grand to converse with the common people. That's yourselves by the way. You'll notice that the long-awaited revamp picture of me hasn't arrived. The photographer was ill. Honest. So it wil come next month although don't hold your breath. Instead, send a letter to TAKEOFF AND LANDING Q&A, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, EC1R 3AU.





recesses of Hell. 3. Cannon Fodder is more fun. 4. I would say that Micro Machines '96 is.

JEFFRY

Dear Gus
Please could you answer these questions.
1. Should I sell my Megadrive or keep it for a couple of years?
2. Is Mortal Kombat 3 a load of rubbish?
3. Are Virtua games better than 2-D games?
4. Are there any decent games out on the Saturn that haven't been heard of yet?
5. Will there be any more Sonic games?
John McCafferty, Newsouthgate, London.
GUS:**1. Keep it. There's some good stuff next year, and lots of excellent bargains around now. 2. No way. 3. Sega's Virtua games have all been excellent, but some 2-D games like X-Men are just as good. 4. We're bringing you the line-up as it happens. Look out for Indy 500, Fighting Vipers, Thor. 5. The Sonic team are working on a project right now...**

VIRTUA CALENDAR

Dear Gus
Please can you answer these questions.
1. I'm thinking of upgrading to a Saturn. Is it worth keeping my Megadrive and CD?
2. Is it worth waiting for the price to go down?
3. I hear there will be an upgraded Saturn early next year. Is this true?
4. What percentage would you give the Playstation compared to the Saturn?
5. Do you think the Saturn should be able to play Megadrive games?
6. Why oh why are there crap games coming out for the Saturn?
P.S. Please print this letter as someone bet me a tenner you wouldn't.
Kelvin Thompson, Coalville, Leics.
GUS:1. Why not? 2. The price has already dropped by £100. I don't think it wil fall much below that for quite some time. 3. That's not



true. 4. What a stupid question. 5. I'd rather spend my money building a library of excellent Saturn games. 6. It has taken some time for programmers to work out the Saturn hardware. The newer stuff is in a different league from the early games.

LION

Dear Gus
I have never written before so please, please, please, print this letter in your fab mag as I need the answers to these questions very quickly. I am totally stuck on what to buy: Saturn or a Playstation, so these questions might help me to decide.
1. Will the game production be better on the Playstation or Saturn?
2. Last year I had an Amiga CD32 and they never really took off and the game production came to a halt. Please assure me that this won't happen to the Saturn or Playstation.
3. Which would you buy and why? Please be fair.
4. What is the difference between an RF lead and a Scart lead?
David Lowe, Worcester.
GUS:**1. Both machines have good games. Only Saturn has the top software development teams AM1, 2 &3. 2. There is no way that the Saturn is a CD32 kind of machine: over 1,500,000 machines have already been sold in Japan. With the massive resources of Sega behind it, I'd say the machine cerainly has a secure future. 3. I genuinely prefer the Saturn and its titles. 4. SCART is a telly system that produces a much clearer and sharper picture. RF is the same as a normal telly aerial, and relays and inferior picture.**

TEKKEN JIGSAW

Dear Gus,
This is the first time I have written to you, so please could you answer my questions.
1. Is Road Rash 3 any good?
2. What is your favourite Sega computer?
3. Is Judge Dredd any good? It looks rubbish.
4. What happened to Rayden in Mortal Kombat 3? He's not in it.
5. If there's going to be a Sonic 4, will there be some new characters?
Richard Sweeney, Mid-Glamorgan, Bridgend.
GUS:1. It's okay. 2. Currently the Saturn. 3. It's okay. 4. On holiday? 5. I don't know.

SANTA

Dear Gus
I need some questions answering.
1. Is Toejam and Earl 3 any good?
2. Put these games from worst to best. Jimmy White's Snooker, Micro Machines 2, Mortal Kombat 3, Primal Rage, Streets of Rage 3, Rise of the Robots, Ristar, Theme Park, Story of Thor, Earthworm Jim, Dynamite Headdy and Shining Force 4.
3. What is the worst game for the Megadrive?
4. Going off the subject, I set up my Amstrad while my Megadrive was broken. I was wondering if you knew how to get past the second door on Knightmare?
5. Is it worth getting a PC CD Rom?
6. How many Megadrive games are there?
7. How much money do you get from selling magazines?
Barry Wallace, Gloucester
GUS:**1. What? There have only been two games. 2. I've had enough of these lists. Try reading the reviews each month. 3. Probably Dark Castle. It's very old. 4. I haven't the foggiest. 5. If you like reading about spiders and Shakespeare I suppose. 6. Over 500. 7. Lord Emap makes a ruddy fortune.**



mega mart

Mean Machines Mega Mart is for private advertisers - trade adverts will not be published!

MEGA DRIVE GAMES for sale, Pete Sampras, Jimmy White Snooker, Psycho Pinball, Chaos Engine, Mortal Kombat, £15 each, 3 for £40 or 5 for £60, Also loads of top games to swap. Tel: Chris (01443) 835 492

MEGA DRIVE GAMES for sale, Mortal Kombat II £30, Jungle Strike £20, Sonic 3 £20, Super Wrestle Mania £15, Populous £15, Battle Squadron £10, Sonic £10, Back To The Future 3 £5, Batman £5, All V.G.C. Phone 01788 891 039. Must Collect.

SNES for sale with 4 top games including Super International Cricket and Starwing, will sell for £100 ono. Phone (01490) 450 306

MEGA DRIVE GAMES for sale, Street Fighter II £25, Arnold Palmer Golf £20, James Pond II £20, Golden Axe II £20, Tiny Toons £20, Flashback + Tiny Toons (Genesis) £20 each, Phone (01438) 716 675

MEGA DRIVE GAMES for sale, Rugby World Cup and Royal Rumble £35 or £20 each Phone (01355) 248 322 from 5pm - 10pm

MEGA DRIVE GAMES for sale, Sonic 2, Dizzy, Cosmic Spacehead, Castle Of Illusion, Haunting, Wiz 'n' Liz, Puggsy, Zool, James Pond 3, All for £100 ono. Buyer must collect (colchester area) for pay postage, phone 01255 678 923 after 5pm ask for Vicky, All in excellent condition.

SEGA 32X £80, Doom £30, Star Wars Arcade £30, MEGA-CD2 with Road Avenger £75, Sensible Soccer £15, Sonic CD £15, Final Fight CD £10, MEGA DRIVE with 17 games also available, will sell everything for £290 phone 0121 353 9101.

MEGA DRIVE for sale, 2 Pads, Powerstick, LightGun, 21 games including Stargate, Pete Sampras Tennis, PGA Tour II, Desert Strike, FIFA'95, Earthworm Jim, Worth over £900, £450 all in, split possible call 01923 249 344 after 7.30pm answerphone before.

AMIGA for sale, 2 Meg, 30 games £80. Megadives Sensible Soccer, swap for EA Rugby, NHL '95. Call Mark 0171 538 2960

MEGA DRIVE GAMES for salelll Mercs, Terminator, Sonic 1 - £5. Desert Strike, Sonic 2 - £10. S.O.R. 2, Micro 1 - £15. Micro 2, FIFA'95, Jungle Strike, Urban Strike - £20. MK2, Earth Worm Jim, Virtua Racing - £25. Mega CD games, Silpheed, Jaguar XJ220 - £15. Call Simon (01932) 882 321

MEGA DRIVE with 9 games. All excellent condition, £150 ono. Games include: Earth Worm Jim, Jungle Strike, Dune II, plus other classics, Also sold seperately. Prices from £5 cash only, other offers considered, when necessary you must collect or pay P&P phone (01788) 810108.

AMIGA 500 for sale, with about 90 games including Sensible World Of Soccer, Cannon Fodder 2, Super Skidmarks, Premier Manager 2 and Goal. 2 Joysticks and Mouse with Mat also included. All for only £170 call Oliver 0181 866 1765.

A4 CHEAT BOOKLET for Mortal Kombat 3 (including be the bosses in MK3). Cheats never seen before for MK3. AMAZING! Tips & cheats all in one booklet. The most ultimate purchase for kombat fans. send an S.A.E. and £1.50 to Simon Davis, 75 Airdale Av. Chiswick London W4 2NN.

TO SWAP Super Adventure Islands for Killer Instinct or The Mask (SNES) call Adam 0171 402 3320.

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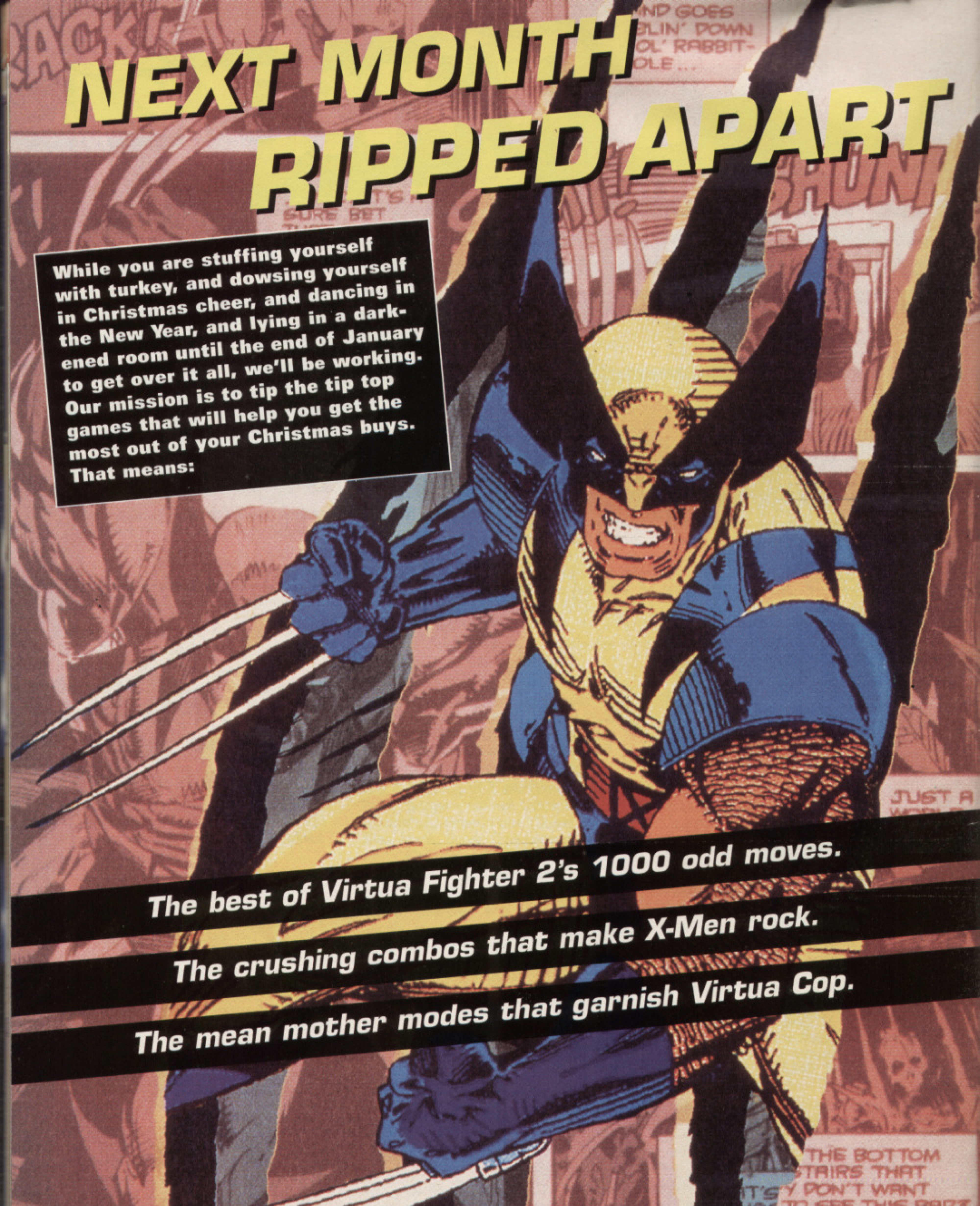
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The best of Virtua Fighter 2's 1000 odd moves.

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